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HOLDING OUT HER HAND, SHE COULD BUT STAMMER, "I AM SO GLAD; YOU DID IT SO NOBLY!  
OH, I WISH I WERE YOU!"

## A DESPERATE VENTURE;

Or, FOR LOVE'S OWN SAKE.

BY ARABELLA SOUTHWORTH.

### CHAPTER I.

A STRANGER AND A HERO.

"Oh, listen to the wind! It is rising higher

every moment, I believe," said Ermentrude Bayliss, turning from the window with a shiver, as a great gust shook the frame as if it would dash in the glass and force its way through to the comfortable, warmly-lighted room within.

"Don't listen to it," advised her cousin, Flora Maynard, glancing up from her book and easy-chair by the fire.

"I should like to know how I am to help it unless I can turn myself stone deaf," returned



Ermentrude. "How awfully the waves are sounding, too! Oh, dear, on nights like these I always wish that I lived anywhere but within sight and hearing of the sea. There it comes again! It is getting worse."

"Draw the curtains and come away, you foolish little nervous thing! Don't stand trembling and looking like a ghost. Congratulate yourself, as I do, that you are in a moderately comfortable shelter and not at the mercy of the waves. They are making a noise, I must say,"—as the low-voiced thunder came rolling up sullen and heavy amid the wind's wailing. "We shall not get much sleep to-night, unless the storm abates."

"Hark! What is that?" whispered Ermentrude, turning white, and looking agitatedly toward her cousin.

"An extra big roar."

"It is not. It is a gun; a ship in distress. There it is again!"—as the wind momentarily lulled, and a dull boom came solemn and heavy over the noisy waters. "Oh, dear, I can't bear this! Where is papa, I wonder? Are they putting out the life-boat?" She crossed to the bell, and rung it, and said to the old servant who answered, "Is papa in the house, Martha?"

"Master has gone to Freyling Place, Miss Ermentrude. He went before the storm began, and I expect it will keep him there. He would not walk along that cliff in a wind like this."

"Papa is always at Freyling Place," said the girl, impatiently to herself. "Do you hear the minute guns, Martha? There is a ship near, is there not?"

"You can see her from the beach quite plain. John has just been up to tell us. They say she can't live till morning, is like to break in pieces every hour, and is covered with poor creatures. Alack-a-day, poor souls! There are crowds on the beach watching."

"Are they not putting out the life boat?" interrupted the girl, hurriedly.

"Well, miss, I heard something about being short of hands. They will have a try at it, I expect; but—"

"For mercy's sake do drop the subject! We can't do anything to help them. What is the good of making ourselves ill, and shaking, and miserable?" cried Miss Maynard, tossing her book on the table and springing up. "Is not tea ready, Martha? We need not wait for uncle if he is at Freyling Place. Let us do something to change the dismal tenor of our thoughts."

"Tea is quite ready," said Martha. "Come along, Miss Ermentrude, dear," putting her hand coaxingly on the girl's shoulder; "a cup of tea will give you some color, maybe, and you won't hear the wind so plainly in the dining-room."

"You have tea, Flora. Order in anything you like, dear," said Ermentrude. "I could not eat; it would choke me. I am going down to the beach, Martha. You will come with me, won't you?"—turning suddenly to the woman. "I cannot sit, while knowing what is going on, any longer."

Ermentrude Bayliss had ruled her father's house and every one in it—especially her old nurse, Martha—ever since she could utter a command.

Left motherless and with a father caring far more for his business than for his only child, she had grown up in her own way, and had had her own way in things great and small, all her life. Consequently she was a little imperious now—a little given to eccentric and impulsive actions; but too nobly true, too innately lady-like to let her freedom and impulse carry her one step into harm.

Flora Maynard looked up in lady-like horror now at her cousin's suggestion.

"Go down to the beach, Ermentrude! Are you mad?—or do you want to be blown into the sea to keep the poor ship company?"

"I sha'n't get blown into the sea if I keep the shelter of the cliffs. We know exactly where to stand, don't we, Martha? You are not afraid, eh, old woman?" squeezing her arm.

"I should not be a fisher's wife and mother if I was, I reckon," replied Martha; "but, Miss Ermentrude, dear, do listen to your cousin. It is a fearful night, and your papa might not like your going out in it. If you should catch cold, or any harm should come of it?"

"There are crowds down there, you say. Why should harm come to me more than to them? I must see the life-boat launched. Do forgive me leaving you to have tea alone, Flora, dear, and make yourself comfortable." Kissing her cousin—"Mind you have all you want!"

"I think you may trust me to do that," responded calm Flora. "You are as mad as a March hare, Ermentrude. I only hope uncle won't come home while you are out."

"He won't miss me, if he does. He always comes back from Freyling Place absent and thoughtful, with his mind miles away from here. I can't think what he and Mr. Freyling talk about. Run and fetch my ulster, Martha, please; and wrap yourself up. I will go!"

"You don't know this Mr. Freyling, did you not tell me?" questioned Flora, with more interest in her manner than it had displayed yet. "Does he never come here?"

"I have never seen the man. He has only come into the neighborhood just lately. Freyling Place has been empty for ages, while he has been abroad; and now that he has come home at last, he keeps himself wonderfully



shut up. He is as exclusive as even you could wish, Flora. Papa goes there so much because he is doing some kind of business with him, I think. Oh, there you are, Martha! Now we will start."

It was a fairly sheltered walk from Laurel Villa, the Baylisses' house, to the beach; nevertheless, the two women, clinging together, had hard work, now and again, to maintain a footing while fighting step for step against the fierce wind that almost took their breath and strength away.

Down on the beach, as Martha had said, there were crowds; all the little village of Gloster seemed to have turned out, with white, excited faces, hoarse voices, and eager, strained eyes, turned in the one direction, where, ever and again, across the dark, roaring waves, a flashing light made a dim, huge shape for an instant discernible, and there followed the appealing boom of the gun.

With the spray from the sea covering her, with the wind loosening her hair, and tossing back the hood she had drawn over it, Ermentrude stood with a group of fisherwomen, watching, helpless as they.

"Are they not going to put off the boat?" she asked, over and over again. "Oh, how slow they are! It will be too late!"

"Little use trying it at all," grumbled an old fisherman, passing, and joining in. "I tell 'em they'll never get nigh her afore she's gone. She's a-breaking up now, I saw when the last rocket went off. It is a waste of good life—sinful waste, that is what I say it is—to attempt it. Let her go; they are but strangers aboard her, and naught to us! Let her go! What call have we to lose our lives over theirs? There they are, fools, trying to launch against this sea!" he muttered, looking toward the boat tossed back by the mighty waves. "It is a shame such a risk should be allowed!"

"It is a shame you should be allowed to speak, if you can only give such cowardly advice to men braver than yourself!" cried Ermentrude, turning upon the speaker, with an excitement that carried her out of herself, and from remembrance of anything but the wild scene before her. "You ought not to be allowed to call yourself an American, Dan Hector, if you can calmly stand within sight and sound of perishing fellow-creatures, and stir neither hand nor foot for them. Oh, that I were a man!" cried the impulsive girl, passionately. "To have to stand here and do nothing is agony! If I had but the strength to help with that boat! If they would but take me as it is! Surely, even a woman would be better than no one, if they have not enough help!"

She started off from Martha's side as she spoke, in some wild idea of running toward the boat. She was heedless of the evil look which

old Dan Hector's ugly countenance turned upon her for the rebuff she had so publicly administered to him, and which one or two bystanders had applauded; but she was stopped by a quiet hand touching hers, and a stranger's voice said courteously, speaking with a slightly foreign accent: "Madam, there are quite enough now. We have got more aid from the village, and the boat will be in time, I trust."

She looked at him as he spoke just in passing, bending toward her that his words might be heard above the wild noise of the wind and sea.

"You are going?—you are brave. You will try your best?" she breathed.

And he smiled reassuringly as he met her earnest look.

"I will do my best," he said, and was gone, hurrying down in the semi-darkness toward the boat, preparing for another struggle.

She was conscious of a little perplexity with regard to him; not because his smile and his glance, dimly seen in that faint light and the hubbub, struck her even in that excited moment as different in some way from any smile or glance her life had yet encountered; but he was dressed as all ordinary fishermen—just a common young fisherman from another village. Yet there seemed a tone in his words, a grace in his manner, a something flashing and felt rather than defined, that to Ermentrude's keen perception, marked him as greatly different from any fisherman she had ever spoken to before.

"Perhaps it is because he is a foreigner," she thought, and forgot him in the all-absorbing, breathless interest with which the boat, now fairly launched, was watched on her perilous way.

"If he drowns 'em all, that chap ought to be had up for manslaughter," Dan Hector growled, at a safe distance from Ermentrude's ears. "Young upstarts like him running round and persuading folks it's their dooty to risk their lives because, bless yer, he don't mind risking his, and cutting off like lightning to the village to rouse honest fathers of families out of their beds to kill themselves! What has made him so precious busy about what don't concern him, and where has he come from all of a sudden, I should like to know! Nobody see'd him about here afore to-day. I hate strangers interfering and meddling, I do."

"Miss Ermentrude, love, come home," pleaded poor old Martha, gasping and crouching under the shadow of the rocks. "You are drenched through and through, and the wind does not go down a bit. The boat is out of sight now. Come home, and hear all about it in the morning. You'll catch your death of cold."

But her charge shook her head.



"Go you home, if you like," she said. "I stop till the boat returns, Martha."

A few more minutes of voiceless listening, while the winds shrieked wildly, and the huge waves rolled furiously in upon the beach.

Some of the women had grown more pale than ever, for before it had been but strangers' lives that were in peril; now, brothers and husbands were in danger.

Then there went a murmur round, started by some one, who, with better eyes, or at better point of vantage than the rest, could see the vague dark mass still heaving and laboring in her death-struggles, that the ship was reached, and then silence and agonized waiting again, for the boat was coming back.

"If they are letting that stranger chap hold the tiller, and they was when they started," croaked old Hector, "they will never see daylight again, make up your minds to that. In course he knows no more than a baby about the ins and outs of the shore. How should he, a meddling and interfering stranger—drat him! And it just all depends now on the way they are brought in. Ay, they're lost, I fear, poor souls! Can't see 'em now. I said it was shameful risk."

"Yours is the shame to talk like that," sobbed a woman with a shawl over her head, "and me with my Peter in the boat. Ah, there, you always was the biggest old croaker Gloster ever knew. They are coming right enough. John Mills sees 'em. They are coming, bless 'em!"

Laden with human freight, the brave boat came nobly on, gallantly pulled, perfectly steered, fighting inch by inch with the thirsting, cruel waves; one moment seeming ingulfed by a huge sea, and next appearing on the summit of a mountainous billow.

Land was gained, and a loud, glad cheer rising above the wind welcomed the rescued and their heroic deliverers. But at the same moment came a long, sobbing shriek that mingled with the moan of the waves, and when they looked where the poor ship had been, there was only darkness.

She had gone down with those that remained on her.

There was a rush forward to meet the crew, and the saved ones were carried on shore.

Indistinct voices, dancing lights, dripping figures and features—those were the only memories Ermentrude retained of the scene.

The wind had gone down suddenly, the storm had done its worst, and out from the murky, parting clouds now a faint, shame-faced moon peeped shyly.

Pressing forward with offers of hospitality and aid for the shipwrecked, Ermentrude found herself jostled against the stranger who had spoken to her on his way to the boat.

He was leaning against a piece of rock, one arm hanging down helplessly, and his face pale, it seemed, or the moonlight made it so.

Ermentrude stopped. She was used to talk to all the fishers she met upon the beach, and just now her heart was glowing with admiration for the noble crew who had done the most gallant deed she had ever seen.

She was longing to praise, to congratulate every member of it. Yet as she paused to speak to this man, and his grave dark eyes met hers, she was suddenly conscious of an overpowering, unaccountable shyness that stifled the words she had been about to utter.

Holding out her hand, she could but stammer, "I am so glad; you did it so nobly! Oh, I wish I were you!"

And then she hated herself for that self-consciousness which in a moment like this made her suddenly remember her disheveled hair and lost hood as she felt that quiet, comprehensive glance wandering over her.

The young man took her hand in his left one and said, "I am very glad, too, though we did not do as much as we could have wished; but—You are going home, surely, now?" glancing solicitously at her wet ulster. "This has been no night for one like you to be out in."

"I am going now," she said, confusedly; and walked by Martha's side as fast as the steepness of the road and Martha's age would permit, home to prepare beds and warm clothing for the strangers she had persuaded to accept her hospitality.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE OWNER OF FREYLING PLACE.

"MR. FREYLING is coming to dinner to-night," said Flora Maynard, with animation. "I must say I am curious to know that man. An old bachelor, with a large income and an old monastery like Freyling Place, he is quite a catch, you know. Dear me! in Boston he would not be treated with the calm indifference you evince down here, I assure you. Half the mothers in society would lay snares for him. I maintain, Ermentrude, you ought to make it your business to become Mrs. Freyling."

"To become what?" Ermentrude turned her laughing blue eyes round from the flowers she was watering. "Thanks, Flo; when I leave papa, which I shall be in no hurry to do, it will be to become a young man's companion, I hope, and not an old crony of papa's. Mr. Freyling! Why, he is as old as papa himself, every bit; and between ourselves, I hate him!"

"What is age in comparison with income?" asked Flora, lazily swinging herself to and fro in the rocking-chair. "You hate him, do you say? Why, how do you manage that, when you have never seen or spoken to him?"

"I hate the change his influence has worked



in papa. Ever since he became intimate with this old Freyling he has been growing drier and moodier every day. You must have seen it for yourself, Flo. Every time he comes from Freyling Place he returns home more cross, less talkative, more miserable-looking. I don't know what I am to do with him if he goes on like this."

"Marry Mr. Freyling," laughed Flora; "then you can reside at the old monastery, and see what they are up to. I do notice that uncle has changed very much, but it struck me it was business anxieties and that kind of thing which made him gloomy. This is such a bad time for bankers, you know—so many houses have failed. Well, it is time we began to dress for dinner, dear. Let us attire ourselves that one of us may knock over the antique Freyling; knock him over in love, I mean—down like a nine pin, dear old boy."

"It shall be you, then. I wish you would marry him, Flo, if you are anxious that he should be married, and come and live within a mile of me. That would be jolly."

"I will see what my mauve dress will do for the idea," returned Miss Maynard, opening her wardrobe; "and my lace fichu—that ought to strike him, I think. By the way, when is that dark, mysterious, gloomy, and unquestionably reserved person you and Martha brought home with you from the wreck going to take her departure? She has been here almost a week. Do shipwrecked visitors always stay a week?"

"I don't know, I am sure. I never had any before, poor creatures," said Ermentrude, fastening her white gown. "The others we brought home the night of the storm went away next day, you know; but this one, poor Janet Carnarvon, had no place nor friends to go to, she said, so I begged her to stay awhile; but she will leave early to-morrow morning. She wants a situation as housekeeper."

"We will recommend her to old Freyling. If he wants a gloomy, depressing housekeeper to manage his gloomy, depressing old residence, he could not beat Miss Carnarvon. One would think to look at her that she was shipwrecked once a week. Hark! he cometh"—running to the window. "I hear the wheels of his dog-cart. Why, Ermentrude, what do I see? Quite a handsome and by no means antique-looking beau. See how blithely he hops out of his carriage. He has the full use of his limbs—is a little gray, perhaps, about the whiskers and head, but, cousin, dear, what eyes he has!"

"Has he?" said Ermentrude, peeping cautiously over the other's shoulder.

But the visitor had gone into the house, so she had to wait for her first look at him until she entered the drawing-room, and then Mr. Bayliss introduced "Mr. Freyling, Ermentrude. My daughter, Mr. Freyling."

He said "my daughter" with some little pride, and a parent must have been absorbed indeed to have surveyed Ermentrude without something of the kind.

Her soft white dress fitted her exquisite figure to perfection; her golden hair held one white rose in its coils; her mitts, fan and shoes were black; her face was the sweetest, purest and kindest a man could wish to look upon; and she raised two eyes like blue stars as she welcomed her guest with a charming smile.

Flora saw the guest's surprised look, saw the quick admiration succeeding the surprise, and thought to herself comically, "My lace fichu is wasted, I see. No chance for *me*."

Ermentrude surveyed Mr. Freyling as she shook hands. She saw a tall, gray-bearded, grave man, with eyes justifying Flo's exclamation regarding them, they were so dark, so piercing, so apparently capable of seeing far and deeply. There was a melancholy air, however, about himself or his manner which softened the man and made him interesting, and before dinner was half over, Ermentrude had mitigated her opinion regarding him.

There seemed nothing to absolutely dislike in Mr. Freyling. He talked a good deal to his host, a fair amount to Miss Maynard, little or not at all to Ermentrude; but he looked at the latter whenever he got a chance with a long, watchful gaze, which Flora noticed, and that clever young lady drew her own conclusions.

"When these old fogies fall in love," she remarked to herself, "they seem to know they have no time to waste, and go to work promptly and patently, in a way that puts young people to shame."

After dinner the two girls strolled from the drawing-room into the garden, and there from the housekeeper's room came out Miss Carnarvon to meet them.

She was, as Flora had said, an eminently gloomy, dark, and mysterious person; but then to be shipwrecked at the beginning of a journey and lose all her property, as she said she had done, was enough to make any one gloomy, and perhaps her nature was so reserved as to render it impossible for her to make confidants of strangers. Certainly, little enough of her past history had she confided to the Baylisses.

She had been their guest now for a week, and they knew scarcely more about her than when Ermentrude had first seen her, as she was being carried from the life boat to the shore by one of the brave fishermen who had saved her life.

"She is a person who has seen a deal of trouble," Martha said, with that respect some folks accord to vague misfortune.

"She looks like a sphinx," Flora observed, as along the gravel walk in her straight black dress Janet Carnarvon came, stiffly. "I have come to bid you good-by, Miss Bayliss," she



said, "for I leave very early to-morrow morning, and should not like to disturb you then. Thank you a thousand times for your great kindness," she went on with unmistakable feeling, as she pressed the hand Ermentrude put forth readily—"a thousand times for your hospitality."

"Oh, don't thank me," said the girl; "we are only too glad to be of service to you. Must you really leave us to-morrow morning?"

"I must! I have heard of a situation that I think would suit me, and must make haste to look after it. May I come to see you again, Miss Bayliss, if I should ever chance to be in this neighborhood? I should be sorry to think that I was never again to behold a lady who has been so good to me. I have so few friends."

"Oh, do come whenever you can!" said Ermentrude, but not very cordially, for she could not get up a liking for this reserved, odd woman, sorry as she felt for her. "Are all your preparations completed? Is there nothing more that I could give or lend you? Please tell me if there is."

"Nothing, I thank you. But can you tell me the name of the brave man who saved my life? I cannot leave this place without thanking him. I have been unequal to the exertion of a walk down to the village until now. I have made inquiries, and I find that he, too, is a stranger to this place, only appearing and disappearing of late here; but you were talking to him twice during that night of the storm, Martha tells me, so that you, I presume, can direct me where I should be likely to find him."

"A member of the life-boat's crew, do you mean? A stranger, you say?" said Ermentrude, hesitating, and rising with a sudden brightening of complexion.

"A stranger, they tell me, and yet he urged on and got together the crew. For myself, I only know that when left behind on the doomed ship—for the boat was pushing off, for there was no room for more, they cried—I sprang in my despair from the deck, and fell in the boiling, stifling waters! Ah, mercy, the memory of it!" She covered her face with her hands. "He dashed in after me, risking his life a second time for mine, and brought me out somehow, I know not how, for it was all choking horror and darkness; but he hauled me into the boat, I fear hurting himself by doing it. Ah, if all men were like that, what a world it would be!"

"And if you were always like this," thought Flora, laying down her book to watch Miss Carnarvon's suddenly-changed and animated countenance, "you would be quite a handsome woman! Dear me, what a virtue animation is, to be sure!" Then aloud: "This must be the hero that you raved about that night, Ermentrude."

"I never raved about any hero," replied Ermentrude, with unnecessary quickness and a little extra color.

"Not in your sleep, dear?" mischievously. "Oh, you forget! 'If doughty deeds my lady please,' etc., etc. My dear, what have you done to your face? Turn round—it is like a poppy!"

"Don't be so silly!" retorted Ermentrude, with as near an approach to crossness as her sweet temper could be guilty of. "I think I will go down to the beach with you, Miss Carnarvon. It is such a lovely evening, and I have my hat and jacket on ready. I should like a little walk."

"To seek for the hero of the storm? Not at all a bad idea!" said Flora. "I rather think I will come, too. These spring evenings, as you say, are very entrancing. We will leave old Freyling to entertain himself, and go forth to meet the gallant stranger. Is he as handsome as brave, Ermentrude? Is he as noble as handsome, etc.?"

"He is just a common fisherman, you know," said her cousin, with significance.

"A common fisherman!" cried Flora. "Oh, how my interest flags entirely! It is common fishermen you fraternize with in storms, and come home to rave about, is it? Oh, you and Miss Carnarvon go without me, then. I'll stop and entertain Mr. Freyling. A common fisherman! I thought he was some gentleman staying at the hotel."

"I will just go in and get my warm shawl, Miss Bayliss," said Janet Carnarvon, quietly. "I will say farewell to your kind father, too, and then meet you, if you please, at the garden gate, and we will go together, as you suggest, to the village."

She turned away as she spoke, and just then an approaching footstep sounded.

It was that of Mr. Freyling, who was coming from the house by a different path from the one Miss Carnarvon had chosen, but he could see her retreating back as he advanced.

Possibly, too, he had heard her voice, for the air was very still.

"Who is that?" he asked the girls, abruptly standing before them, but regarding still with fixed gaze that gaunt retiring figure until the shrubs hid it. "Who is that?" repeated he before they had time to answer.

Flora had a vivid imagination. It must have been that which made her fancy that there was a touch of anxiety in the words—a something of uneasiness in his look as he cast it searchingly on her as she took upon herself in her bantering way to answer. "That, Mr. Freyling, is a relic of the shipwreck the other night, whom my cousin here captured and brought home. You must know"—leaning back in her chair with her pretty hands clasped behind her neck—"this romantic young person



would not stop within four safe walls that terrific night, but must needs scamper off to the beach to help man the life-boat, only the life-boat very properly refused to be so manned. Then she waited to pounce upon the poor unfortunates whom it rescued, and brought them toiling up here—four or five of them—and the whole night long she was up waiting upon them, or racking her brains to think of something they could possibly be induced to require. What do you think of such proceedings Mr. Freyling? Her friends have done nothing but rebuke her ever since!”

Ermentrude's friends had indeed contrived to make the storm a very sore subject for the girl, by declaring that of all her wild deeds that night's had been the wildest.

Ermentrude colored now, and looked extremely uncomfortable as Mr. Freyling, turning, and bending with a certain tenderness of manner not unbecoming to his grave stateliness toward her, said, “If deep admiration for such uncommon bravery and unselfishness is rebuke, then, Miss Bayliss, I join your friends and rebuke you heartily.”

“Bravo!” commended Flora. “That was very prettily expressed, Mr. Freyling! By the way, I wish you had come up a minute earlier. I was just saying that you ought to be introduced to the lady you saw departing. You and she would get on swimmingly together, we think.”

“Indeed! Why?” Sharply he turned his piercing gaze again upon the bantering girl. “What is this lady's name, if you please?”

“There seems to me to be a likeness between you, that is why I think you would suit each other,” pursued irrepressible Miss Maynard, nothing quelled by his look. “Her name? Oh, it is geographical—Miss Carnarvon! What is the matter, Mr. Freyling? Is it a wasp, or have you found a bird's nest in that tree?”

He had suddenly taken a few sharp steps, and stopped before a huge lilac, into which he stood gazing.

Ermentrude, who had been fidgeting for the last few moments, rose, and broke the pause by saying:

“You won't think me rude, Mr. Freyling, I hope, if I leave you to be entertained by my cousin for a little time. Miss Carnarvon wants to go down to the village, and I have promised to show her the way.”

“Is she going to stay in the village?” questioned he, abruptly turning. “This Miss Cardogan—Cadbury—what is her name?”

“Carnarvon!” repeated Flora, distinctly. “You catch up names badly, Mr. Freyling. Some people do; they never can remember them. Oh, no; she is leaving the neighborhood early to-morrow morning; that is the pity of it. There is no chance of introducing you, and you would get on so well together!”

“I doubt it.”

His visage wore the first suspicion of a smile the girls had seen upon it.

Never was a countenance less formed for smiles than that of this dark, grave owner of Freyling Place.

“You won't be likely ever to see her again, I suppose?”

“Oh, possibly! She talks of coming to see me again. But I must not keep her waiting now; she is at the gate,” said Ermentrude.

“Let me escort you to it,” begged the guest. “It is a cold wind, Miss Bayliss,” remarked he, confidentially, as they walked away from Flo. “Are you”—and he ventured to touch her seal-skin jacket—“sufficiently wrapped up for these dangerous spring evenings? You look so”—glancing at her transparent skin and liquid eyes—“so delicate.”

“Delicate!” laughed Ermentrude. “I am as strong as you.”

“Nay,” he said, laying his hand suddenly upon her ungloved wrist; “look at the difference.”

There was a difference between his brown sinewy hand (scarcely altogether a gentleman's hand in the coarseness of its skin and shape) and hers—tiny, soft, and white.

She drew away with a shudder from his strong touch, and turned her head abruptly, that his glance might no longer rest on her face.

“Don't come any further,” said she; “I see Miss Carnarvon just there.”

Freyling could see her, too, as he stood himself, unseen by the woman waiting at the gate.

Her dark, harsh profile was turned toward him; her thoughtful glance went out to the sea.

From her pose, the massing of her hair, and a certain queenly grace about the head, it just then struck Ermentrude for the first time that some day long ago that dark woman had been handsome, and she turned with the thought to her companion.

“Should not you think that, when a girl, Miss Carnarvon was beautiful?” she asked, in a whisper.

“Possibly,” said he, negligently; “as far as a dark woman can lay claim to beauty. I admire nothing but fairness myself.”

His eyes, wandering over his companion's golden hair, pointed the compliment.

Ermentrude passed on without making any answer; but as she and Miss Carnarvon went slowly down the path to the beach, she felt sure that from behind that gate Mr. Freyling's dark, powerful gaze still dwelt upon herself and the woman by her side.

### CHAPTER III.

#### A BOLD FISHERMAN.

SITTING on a rock, just where the path down



the cliffs bent, was the young stranger who had given Gloster some matter of conversation and wonderment by his coming among them.

And they liked him; his frank, pleasant manner, his handsome face, his strength, courage, and daring had won a good many of the simple, honest fishers' hearts; but they could not understand him.

Leaning against the rock, the unconscious grace of his attitude displaying his fine figure to advantage, though clad only as when before she had seen him in coarse blue serge—clad, indeed, like all the young men of Gloster—Ermentrude Bayliss wondered how it was that he looked more thoroughly a gentleman than the owner of Freyling Place, as she and Miss Carnarvon, turning the bend, suddenly came upon the young fisherman.

He sprung up as their footsteps sounded, and his countenance brightened as he caught sight of Ermentrude.

He bowed, smilingly, with easy natural courtliness, and Ermentrude said, whispering shyly to her companion, "I think, Miss Carnarvon, this is the man you want, isn't it?"

"I should know him amid a thousand, though I saw him in such horror and darkness as I shudder to remember," said Miss Carnarvon, advancing with her hand outstretched, her features again lighted up and changed. "I am not a woman of many words," she went on, looking up in the young man's face; "but I could not leave Gloster without saying to you, 'If ever you should need a service that a human being could render you, remember,'—her words came slowly, and Ermentrude grew conscious of their solemn ring—"remember Janet Carnarvon's life is due to you, and she would give it to pay the debt. She won't be at ease till she has discharged some part of it.' These are not meaningless words."

"I am sure they are not. Thank you for them," he said, simply, with his bright, charming smile, as he gave her hand a hearty grasp.

He did not attempt to depreciate his own action, and Ermentrude liked him for that.

But now she noticed for the first time that he carried his right arm in a sling.

"Did you hurt your arm that night?" she asked, gently,

"I think so; I was hardly conscious of it at the time. It is nothing much—only a collar-bone broken."

"I should call that a great deal if it were mine," laughed the girl.

"Ah, but you and I are on two different levels."

The wind took the book he had dropped on the shingle, and as it fluttered open to Ermentrude's feet she saw that it was a novel in French.

"Oh, you are a Frenchman!" cried she,

solving by that discovery the puzzle of his tone and manner. The French were naturally so courteous and graceful.

"I am nothing of the sort!" replied he, in a hurry, not noticing what had suggested the remark. "I was never even in the country. Do I look so horribly foreign? I am an American, I assure you, as much as you are."

"Then you must be something different from what you appear," raising her lovely eyes inquisitively, "for I never knew a fisherman understand French yet, and I have been used to fishermen all my life."

"You have been used to the fishermen of Gloster," replied he, with a quizzical smile passing over his countenance. "A set not given to self-improvement, I fear. Oh, I see," following her eyes toward his book; "you think it audacious of me to attempt to study such a perplexing language as French without a teacher. But I am very anxious to improve myself, Miss Bayliss. Of course,"—picking up the volume with a sigh—"it is weary, dispiriting work, unaided. I long for help to explain the idioms. You know all about them, of course?"—deferentially. "Ah, if I had but a little assistance, a little explanation here and there, I should get on twice as fast."

His look in pleading earnestness pointed the hints conveyed in that lamentation. His eyes were dark, and the most beautiful Ermentrude had ever seen—speechful and liquid, large and deep.

"You can't afford to pay for lessons, of course?" said she, debating in her mind whether there would or would not be harm in her offering a little assistance to this praiseworthy seeker after knowledge. She had taught in the boys' night school all through the last winter.

"How could a poor fisher afford French lessons?" The young man smiled at the idea.

"I will have him up to our house, and teach him," determined the charitable girl. "Flora shall sit in the room all the time—or, no, old Martha would be less likely to interrupt. Then there can be no harm in it." Aloud: "I shall be very glad to help you if you are going to stop any time in Gloster. If you came up to our house I would explain as much as I could, if that would make your studies easier. Perhaps, though, you are busy with your nets in the morning."

But the thirsting-after-languages fisher insinuated that his nets should never stand in the way of such an advantageous proposal, for which he thanked Ermentrude with a quiet but really grateful warmth that made her certain she had done right in offering her services.

"We must be going back, I think, if you are ready," said Ermentrude to Miss Carnarvon.



"I cannot leave Mr. Freyling for long; it would be so rude."

"You will tell me your name and address before we say good-by?" Miss Carnarvon turned earnestly to the young man.

"If you allow me to walk with you up this path we need not say good-by just yet," replied he. "It is getting dark; and it is a lonely way rather. May I come?" he turned to Ermentrude.

Again Ermentrude debated, and saw nothing to object to in that. Old John Mills or Dan Hector might have offered escort in just such a case and she would never have dreamt of refusing it.

So side by side she and the gallant stranger walked very slowly, and because the path would admit of two abreast. Miss Carnarvon walked just behind; so situate, she lost part of their conversation.

"Mr. Freyling, whom you mentioned just now," began the man, "is the owner of Freyling Place, is not he?—a friend of yours, I suppose?"

Just from where they were then a view of Freyling Place's ponderous stone-work could be seen, showing dark and heavy against the sky. Doubtless that suggested the subject.

"I had never seen him before to-day," replied Miss Bayliss. "Papa and he are great friends."

"You have just had a first glimpse of him. How do you like him?"

"I really can hardly say."

"I see; you are cautious. He has not possessed this property for long, has he—Freyling Place?"

"Oh, yes; it has been his ever since his father died, more than thirty years ago; but he had never once been near the place since he was quite a boy, until he came to it last year. He was abroad when his father died, and there he stayed until some freak, a few months ago, brought him home all of a sudden, and now he seems to like to stay. Poor man! he is awfully depressing in appearance and manner, isn't he? Do you know him at all?"

"He has no business to appear depressed with an income like his."

"Do you value money so? I care nothing at all about it. Mr. Freyling had some love-disappointment, I believe, when he was a young man—some very unhappy marriage or trouble of that sort. Whether he was in love with some one who died or refused him, or whether he married and lost his wife, I could never quite get clearly to know; but it is the memory of that which depresses him even now," said Ermentrude.

"How pityingly you speak of him! You believe in love for a life, then, do you, Miss Bayliss?"

"I could only love once myself," she said, softly.

She was gazing dreamily across to the sea, and quite forgot it was a fisherman she was talking to.

The charm of his voice, of the gloaming, and of that irresistible attraction, sympathy, was all of which she was conscious at that moment.

Ah, perhaps Ermentrude's friend had not been wrong when they prophesied that her thoughtlessness would lead her into trouble some day!

"You are right," he returned. "The love that is worth a man's life to wait for—the love that is a crowning blessing to giver and recipient alike—can only come once into the human existence. But half the people in this world have no more idea of such power of loving than these stones. You have. I can see it in your eyes—your voice. He will be a lucky man who—"

Then he checked himself abruptly; and it seemed well he did, for, between an ordinary fisherman in a blue blouse and a rich banker's daughter, the conversation had been surely taking a curious turn.

"Look here, Miss Bayliss," he said, in quite a different tone. "Here is a short cut across to Freyling Place, and the evening is the warmest we have had yet. Should you be too tired if we walked round there and home to your place by the cliff?"

"Miss Carnarvon—" demurred Ermentrude.

But before she had time to get further, that lady interposed.

"I have longed many a time to see that house nearer, Miss Bayliss. There are some curious old brass gates somewhere about it, I am told, and I have a passion for those things."

"The house is teeming with curiosities, I believe," said Ermentrude; "but of course we can't get inside. There can be no harm, however, in our going round that way, if you are really anxious to see those gates, Miss Carnarvon."

As they walked along, they met old Dan Hector, wending his slouching way, with his fishing-nets over his shoulder; and he, saluting Miss Bayliss with scant courtesy, grinned at her escort, and cried, "Got something better to do this evening mate, than work, eh? 'Scorting of ladies, with that arm tied up so interesting, is more in your line than anythink as would roughen them lily-white hands of yours, is not it? Ay, you are a fine fisher, you are! I should like you for a partner, I should!"

"I should like you less witty," replied the young man, with a straight up-and-down look, which, in its haughty contempt, its scornful superiority, silenced the old reprobate, and sent him muttering away.

"I'll be even with him, a stuck-up stranger,



I will, some day afore long, too, staring at a honest fisherman like that! And she, too, with her dainty airs and graces! I owe 'em both one now! Do they reckon they are sweethearts? My! her father don't reckon it, I guess! I'll be even with 'em, but I'll bide my time; I'll watch 'em!"

"I hope you are not annoyed," said the stranger, bending humbly to Ermentrude. "It is my fault; but I assure you I thought the difference in our station—(still with humility, but with a kind of amusement, too, somewhere kept back)—"was too marked, too vast for any misinterpretation to be placed on your condescension, or I should not have suggested walking with you, of course."

"Do you think I care for anything a disagreeable, ignorant old man like Dan Hector may say?" retorted Ermentrude, rosily confused, but defiant. "I—I think it is very kind of you to come out of your way to see me—I mean us—home. I am very much obliged, indeed," with a smile frank and sweet as the morning.

"I am very much obliged to you for the great pleasure you are affording me," said he, and still bending toward her, those words weighed each one with emphasis, were spoken in so low a tone that Miss Carnarvon, now walking on Ermentrude's other side, did not hear one of them. "And you don't care if your kindness is misinterpreted?"

But to that question, accompanied as it was by a most perplexing smile, Ermentrude had no answer ready.

They reached Freyling Place, and stood at the entrance gates, looking in.

"The iron and brass gates you want to see are just across there, Miss Carnarvon," said Ermentrude; "but there is generally the dog about, or we could easily walk in and just look at them. He is a great St. Bernard, and so fierce! Do you see him anywhere?" craning her neck.

He was not in view, so the little party ventured in and across to the gates, which were well worthy of inspection.

But as they stood there, a low, fierce growl heralded the enemy Ermentrude had dreaded, and looking, they saw the shaggy beast advancing, with displayed teeth and a warning voice that meant mischief.

"Oh, dear!" cried Ermentrude, white and still.

"Oh, preserve us!" cried Miss Carnarvon, taking to ungraceful flight.

But the stranger just stepped in front and faced the brute, and as he came angrily on, suddenly the dog stopped, looked changed, then, whining, sprung upon him with mad demonstrations of joy, licking and bouncing.

"Poor old Tostig!" said the young man.

"You have a better memory than a good many people."

"He knows you!" cries Ermentrude, lifting her violet, amazed eyes. "He is fond of you! Why, how in the world is that?"

"How in the world can any one be fond of me?" laughed he, with a look. "I don't know, Miss Bayliss. But there are people with astonishing and atrocious taste in the world."

"I suppose you knew this dog somewhere else?" Miss Carnarvon's quiet voice suggested. "They have wonderfully long memories, these animals."

"Exactly." He turned upon her as if grateful for the suggestion. "I knew him in Switzerland. Poor old Tostig! Down, then! He is Alpine born."

The dog's noise brought the old butler to the house door.

Miss Carnarvon noticed what Ermentrude was too taken up with the mastiff to observe—a quiet nod of recognition pass between the fisherman and the servant before the former said, aloud, "You had better come and prevent your dog from following me;" and the man came forward, bowed to Miss Bayliss, and laid his hand on Tostig's collar.

They walked slowly home to Laurel Villa.

The wind had gone down with the sun; the softly-murmuring sea lay gleaming in the starlight; it was a model of an evening for a stroll with a congenial companion.

"I have not heard your name yet."

Miss Carnarvon held the young man's hand as she said farewell.

He hesitated just a moment, glanced at Ermentrude, then said, "My name is Eberhard Windeley. I am lodging at old John Mills's cottage for the present."

"I will come to see you again before long, when I shall hope to give you some more substantial token of my gratitude than words. It is only words I have to-day," said she.

"I don't want them or anything else," replied he, lightly. "Good-by Miss Carnarvon, and a pleasant journey to you."

Miss Carnarvon said farewell again to Ermentrude, and went up-stairs.

Ermentrude took off her walking things, and went into the drawing-room.

"We thought you had deserted us altogether," said Mr. Freyling, ponderously offering the truant a seat close to his own.

"Well, did you find him all right?" inquired Flora, turning from the piano.

"Find whom?" asked Ermentrude, coloring vexedly.

"The hero in fisher's attire, of course, whom you went to see. I have just been telling Mr. Freyling about him. You were so long away, we had exhausted every other subject."

"I am delighted with the courage of our



life-boat's crew, Miss Bayliss," said Mr. Freyling, leaning over her, and regarding the pretty girl affectionately; "and I think they ought to be encouraged. I propose inviting them to my house and entertaining them myself. Would you—you and your cousin honor me with your presence on such an occasion at my old bachelor gloomy dwelling, Freyling Place?"

"Make it a dance, Mr. Freyling," cried Flora, in a sudden happy thought; "and we will honor, with the greatest readiness, your gloomy old bachelor dwelling with our, and all our friends', presences. Oh, do make it a dance!—a general kind of house-warming. Invite everybody—life-boaters, officers, poor people and rich all mixed, you know; and let us have one good bit of fun. Would not it be grand, Ermentrude?"

"Should you like it?" Mr. Freyling turned with marked manner to Ermentrude.

"Like it! I should love it!" said she, girlishly, her face sparkling at the thought. "A dance—oh, charming!"

"Then, as you wish it, it shall so be. Bayliss,"—Freyling turned with a certain kind of command Flora had noticed once or twice in his manner toward his host—"you will bring these young ladies to Freyling Place if I give the entertainment we are speaking of?"

And Mr. Bayliss responded with meekness. "Certainly, Mr. Freyling."

#### CHAPTER IV.

"YOU ARE A SCAMP."

"DON'T make such an idiot of yourself, Ermentrude! You will be the talk of the whole neighborhood," said Flora.

"You express yourself strongly enough, but I can't say it is quite clearly," retorted Ermentrude, crossly. "What am I to be talked about by the whole neighborhood—such a neighborhood, too, isn't it?—for, pray?"

"For carrying on as you are doing with this young Windingsheet, or Windeley, or whatever his name is—that common fisherman! You are shamefully conspicuous. You—"

"I hate that word 'common,'" interrupted the other, hastily. "Call him a fisherman, if you like; he is not common. And in what way am I making myself conspicuous, pray? we are all here to-night, a mixed gathering. We are supposed to dance and talk with everybody, not to keep to our own stupid sets."

"You are not doing at all what you are supposed, then; for you are keeping very exclusively and stupidly to this one man, not dancing with everybody. If you danced with him it would be better, but you are sitting out; that is what I complain of. I have seen you sit out three times, Ermentrude."

"I don't care if you see me sit out three dozen. How can he dance, poor man, with a broken collar-bone? It is cruel of you to suggest it, Flora."

"You are cruel to him, if you like!" retorted Miss Maynard. "Better make him dance with two broken collar-bones than lead him on for nothing, as you are doing!"

It was the evening of the entertainment at Freyling Place. Two of the spacious rooms were cleared for dancing, and a band provided. Lamps, flowers, glitter had changed the old place beyond recognition.

Outside in the garden figures were moving, Chinese lanterns were swinging, flowers gleaming, waiters hurrying to and fro.

Mr. Freyling had spared no expense in this his first entertainment.

He had done the thing royally, and invited all, great and small, near and distant, to enjoy his hospitality; and the evening was one of those balmy foretastes of summer that come sometimes in early spring, so the house and the grounds shared equally the mixed, moving throng.

Ermentrude and her cousin had met for the first time since entering the ball-room, when Flora took the opportunity of administering her rebuke.

They were standing temporarily alone together in one of the deep windows.

"Leading him on!" Ermentrude repeated, with a movement of her proud little golden head. "How vulgarly you express yourself, to be sure!"

"As to vulgarity," retorted Flo, significantly, "I think the less we say of that the better. I have shut my eyes to the absurd flirtations called French lessons that have been carried on under my very nose. I have said nothing about one or two walks and talks on that dearly-beloved beach of yours that I know have taken place all the same; but when it comes to public encouragement of a low creature like that before our set here to-night, I maintain you have reached the very acme of vulgarity, and I must speak out. I am ashamed to own you as my cousin!"—sternly.

"Disown me, then,"—haughtily. "You had better; for I tell you I would rather talk to Eberhard Windeley than to any of the senseless nonentities that belong to our set here to night; and talk to him I will, too, low creature as he may be in your eyes. Why, you have never even spoken to him! How dare you pass your opinion so freely?"

"I keep to my own station. A handsome face does not atone to me for want of breeding, and education, and manners, and refinement."

"There, exactly," cried Ermentrude, interrupting. "A handsome face is nothing to me. Manners, refinement, sympathy, qualities of



heart and mind, are what I care for; and because this fisherman you despise possesses all these, more and in a higher degree than any one I ever before met with, I will talk to him, whenever and for as long as he can put up with talking to me, no matter what the neighborhood may say."

"Thanks," whispered a voice through the open window.

She turned, and Eberhard himself was passing.

"There!—he heard!"

Ermentrude looked dismayed at her cousin.

"I hope he heard my opinion of him, too," said Flora, nothing put out. "Ermentrude, here is Mr. Freyling coming to ask you to dance."

"Oh, let me hide! He dances like a frog."

"You shall not hide. If he dances like a toad you shall be courteous to him. And think of his income! Silly girl!"—bending to speak fiercely as their host came near. "You just hold the most glorious settlement in your hands, and shall not throw it away. Freyling Place is ready to tumble into your lap. You shall have it. I am determined."

"I declare I won't!" said her cousin. "I hate the place!"

But its master, with his glittering eyes fixed upon her, was bowing and asking her to pass through a quadrille with him. So, making a little grimace, she had to take his arm and go off with him.

More than one glance following them pronounced them a striking couple. He so dark, so stern, so stately; she the fairest picture in the room, clad all in white, with her golden hair, her violet eyes, her pink cheeks her only bit of color, with arbutus looping up the lace of her gown, and pearls on her round neck and arms.

"How are you enjoying yourself?" Freyling asked of the girl, tenderly pressing the hand on his arm.

"Immensely," was her fervent response; and he looked gratified.

Supper was just beginning, when in the back hall Windeley met the old servant whom he had asked to take care of the dog the other evening.

"Master is just in the drawing-room, and there are not too many people about, Mr. Eberhard. Shall I take him that letter now?" the servant whispered.

"I think you may as well," returned Eberhard, drawing a letter carefully from his pocket, and giving it into the other's hand.

Then he followed him, as, putting it upon a salver, the servant carried it up to his master.

Freyling was standing among a group of people, talking in his pedantic way, as the butler entered,

"A letter for you, marked 'immediate,' sir."

Freyling took the letter, murmured some words of apology, and turned a little aside to open it.

Only Eberhard and the servant, watching from just inside the door, could see his features distinctly as he read the few words it contained; only they saw the pallor that came over them, the glazed, guilty expression of terror his eyes took, the way his hand trembled as he held the paper, reading or staring at it as if unable to put it from him.

"Has that woman had anything to do with this?" muttered he, aloud, passing his hand across his brow, forgetful for the moment of every surrounding.

"It was a curious venture, but it has succeeded," Eberhard whispered, turning smilingly to the butler just behind him. "You had not much doubt before, Sam, I think, and knowing what that letter contained, and seeing its effects, can have none at all now, I fancy?"

"None whatsoever, sir," said the servant, emphatically.

"Neither have I. Go up to him and ask him for his keys."

The servant went up, and respectfully made a request for his master's key to the sideboard. He had mislaid his own, he said:

Hearing, without reflecting upon the man's words, Freyling took a ring of keys from his pocket, mechanically, and gave it to him; then he turned, and with the letter still in his hand, went out, like a dazed person, into the garden.

Half the guests were at supper, filling to overflowing the large tables in the dining-room; the rest were principally in the ball-room.

There was hardly any one about in the passages or hall as Eberhard and the servant hurried across them to Mr. Freyling's study—the one room that had been thrown open to the visitors.

The door was locked, but the butler produced the key, and opened it. The room was dark, but he struck a match, and lit one candle; then, moving in the greatest haste, but cautiously as two midnight burglars, the men went to the large desk in the corner, and using a key from the ring Mr. Freyling had given in his preoccupation, opened it, and began to rummage.

One or two papers Eberhard Windeley chose, and deliberately put into his pocket; the greater number he tossed over, discontentedly.

"Not all that I want is here, Sam. I must come some night, as we arranged before, and search that chest up-stairs. Is its key among these, do you think?"

Sam thought it was; whereupon the well-provided fisherman brought a large lump of



wax from his pocket, took a careful and exact impression of every key upon the ring in turn, examined each to see that no bits of wax were sticking in the wards, and handed them back, after a rub upon his handkerchief (a fine cambric handkerchief it was—oddly fine for a working man), to the servant.

"Take them back to him, Sam, before he has quite recovered from his shock," he said; and the man went away with them.

But Eberhard stayed to look about the room a little, to gaze at a picture over the mantle-piece, and to open the books, of which there were a great number lying about. He got so interested in the latter, turning them over one by one, and being very careful to notice every title-page, that he did not hear a little rustling at the door, and looked up, with something of a start, when a woman's voice said, "Mr. Windeley!"

It was Flora Maynard's voice uttering his name in tones of the deepest contempt. She stood looking in upon him, and when he started, beckoned him outside, turned the door-key again in the lock, and motioned to him to accompany her toward the great hall. There standing, and regarding him with scorn, she said, "You are Mr. Windeley, of course? I have never spoken to you, but I know perfectly well no other guest here to-night would so abuse his host's hospitality as to enter his private locked room, and peer and meddle about with his private books and papers, as you were doing just now! I wonder you are not too ashamed of yourself to stop here a moment longer now that you are caught."

"I ought to be, I am sure, for your rebuke is strong enough," returned he. "I dare say it did look bad—awfully bad, if one regards it from your point of view."

He looked at her frankly and straight, not a bit guiltily nor confusedly, as he spoke; and she, meeting those deep, splendid eyes, owned, despite herself, "This man is a hundred times handsomer than I thought."

"But then, you see, Miss Maynard," he went calmly on, "lookers-on do not always see most of the game; and in this case you know nothing at all about it. You have not the least idea what the game is, consequently. My conduct just now appearing, I admit, questionable to you—"

"For any one calling himself a gentleman, it looks scoundrelly!" she retorted, interrupting him.

"Ah! I do not call myself a gentleman; so that scathing stricture passes me by," smiled he, provokingly.

"I have only exchanged five sentences with you," said she, slowly, fixing her keen eyes on him the while, "but your fisher's habit and story do not deceive me any longer, Mr. Wind-

eley. I have had more experience of men and society than my cousin, and I recognize you as a gentleman born and educated. For the rest, as you appear obliged to earn your living in this menial way, as you are without friends, and out of the society you evidently have belonged to, perhaps you are right when you say you are no gentleman *now*. You have lost the position you were born to, I should imagine, by becoming a—"

"Yes—what?" smiling, as she hesitated. "I have lived the best part of my life abroad. Were you going to say a foreigner?"

"I was going to say a scamp!" corrected she.

"I am lost in admiration of your discernment," was his quiet response.

"Do you wish me to spread abroad this little discovery of mine—this little episode of this evening, Mr. Windeley?"

"Well, I know well enough that if you wish to publish it, no power of mine could stop you; but I should certainly prefer that no creature about here heard anything concerning it just for the present. Are you one of the rare women who can keep a secret?"

"I will keep this for you if you will give me another promise instead, and keep it," she returned, quickly.

"Now this sounds business-like. Name your demand, madam?" he said, with the foreign accent that sometimes interestingly pervaded, sometimes was entirely absent from his words.

She glanced round the hall before she spoke. It was empty, save for a couple crossing it, who on their way to the supper-room, took no notice of anything but the road that led to it.

"Promise me to give up this flirtation (I like to call things by their proper names) you are carrying on with my cousin, Ermentrude Bayliss, and I will keep your secret as long as you like." She spoke earnestly.

"I am carrying on no flirtation with Miss Bayliss."

She stamped her little foot impatiently.

"Don't try to hoodwink me. We waste time by this folly. As a man of the world, you know very well what she, poor child, is too innocent to be aware of—the harm the intimate terms she is on with a man in your position, a man, I may also say, of your character, must do her in the eyes of all her friends."

"Of whom you are first and foremost."

"I am Ermentrude's true friend. I have her real good at heart," said Flora, with some touch of emotion in her voice. "She has it now in her power to make a splendid match; but since I have seen you I estimate more correctly the danger of your acquaintance. You are too fascinating for her to be harmlessly intimate with. You see, I am perfectly



candid with you. You are fascinating especially to a girl like my cousin, who does not see below the surface; but what but heartache for one or both of you can come of these French lessons (absurdity! you know French better than she), these talks, walks, etc.? Give them up, I beg of you. You cannot marry her. Even if you had money enough, you know well you are not the kind of man a good, simple child like that should marry. You are a scamp, I know; but I fancy—for I read faces pretty well—you have generosity, and to that I appeal. It is imperative that Ermentrude should marry well now, Mr. Windeley, for her father's affairs are desperately involved. Any day might come the smash, and she have to go wandering out to earn her bread. She guesses nothing of this. But you are a man of the world, and I tell you in confidence, to make you see that you ought not to spoil her prospects for a little idle pleasure for yourself. Leave her—go away from Gloster. What in the world are you stopping in a place like this for?"

"Miss Maynard, your and my business is seemingly getting very intermingled; but surely this is exclusively mine?—the young man checked her.

"Well, be it so, then. You stop, for Ermentrude's sake. You came for it, I suppose? (she is pretty enough to account for any freak on a man's part); but leave Gloster now, for her sake. She will never accept any one else while you are here."

"The man you wish her to accept is Frey-ling, of course?"

"Of course. Any one can see he is struck; but she, idiot, won't encourage him one bit. It would be such a splendid match for her! Oh, dear, it irritates me!" cried Flo.

"Splendid for a refined, sweet, sensitive creature like your cousin to marry a man without one single noble sentiment or taste; a man as incapable of appreciating her, of winning her affection, as an india-rubber doll; a man who—"

"A man with a noble income that she could appreciate. Nonsense about love! It is money, money, money now-a-days that makes the world go round," interrupted Miss Maynard. "Mr. Windeley, look what a lovely place this is! How happy Ermentrude would be in this house, with plenty to sustain it! Help me (in return for that little service I do you, remember) to fix her in it."

She looked at him beseechingly.

He waited a moment; then said, earnestly, "I see the weight of your remarks, Miss Maynard, and promise that I will do everything that lies in my power to get your cousin fixed as mistress of Freyling Place. I promise. Are you satisfied? Then may I have the pleasure of taking you to supper?"

"Thank you," said she; and took his arm. "Yes, we will go to supper now."

## CHAPTER V.

### HER PLEDGED WORD.

"PAPA, are you in?" Ermentrude tapped lightly at the door of Mr. Bayliss's room. "Papa," as a stifled voice answered something unintelligible, "we have been waiting tea for you an hour!"

There was a shuffling footstep inside, then the key was turned in the lock, and the girl, entering, started at the haggard, altered visage that met her gaze.

"Oh, what is the matter?" Then going on impulsively, "It is something connected with that horrid Mr. Freyling, I know! You have been to Freyling Place this afternoon, and you always come back moped and wretched from there; but never before so bad as this! Papa, what is it?"

He drew her in, shut the door, and stumbled back to his seat.

"Ermentrude, are you a child or a woman?" he asked, letting his eyes wander over the fair form and bewitching features bent over him so tenderly.

"Woman enough to understand, and try to help you in any trouble, if you will but trust me!" she said, softly.

"It is you alone in the wide world who can help me now!" Feverishly he drew her hands into his own. "Ermentrude, have you ever thought of marrying?"—trying to make his words connected and calm.

"Marrying? Oh, papa!" laughing and blushing. "Yes; sometimes! But I am in no hurry for that experiment!"

"Nor should I be were things different," with a groan. "But I received a very suitable—very good offer for you to-day, my child, and I should like you to accept it."

"You received? Well, I like that! Who was the intelligent man then who proposed to you in mistake for me?"

"There was no mistake. Mr. Freyling very properly asked my consent before venturing to entreat yours—begged for my influence, in fact, which I assured him should be exerted to the utmost—to the utmost! Do you hear, Ermentrude? It is the desire of my life that you should marry Mr. Freyling!"

He sunk back as he ended, with drawn white face, and gaze fixed in feverish anxiety upon the indignant girl.

"Marry Freyling; that horrid, uninteresting, pedantic old wretch! Marry him, papa! I! No, thank you! Why I would rather marry a gorilla—an elephant—old Dan Hector—anybody! Tell him, with my best respects, he is over old to marry now. Was that your



trouble, papa? Oh, come down to tea, and drink old Freyling's better choice next time. Come along."

"My trouble is that I have an ungrateful, unfeeling, unkind daughter!" whispered Bayliss, letting his head sink on his folded arms. "I tell you I wish you to marry Freyling! Ermentrude, why should you not? You care for no one else, and it is a great honor he does you, a man of his age and fortune condescending to choose a girl like you! It is no joke, Ermentrude! Child, I entreat! Don't laugh!"

"How do you know I care for no one else?" she asked, twining her arms round his neck, and hiding her blushing face on his shoulder. "How do you know that, papa?"

"You have seen no one you could possibly care for!" Then, to the girl's horror and alarm, he slipped down on his knees at her feet, raised his tear-filled eyes and clasped hands, and said, in low, hoarse tones, "In this position I, your father, beg of you, my only child, to save me from ruin—disgrace—death! I am in that man's hands, child, to an extent you cannot understand! My affairs are at his mercy! If he speak the word I tide over this evil day, and am again the honored, respected banker I have ever been! If he raise a finger I fall, crushed, ruined, and—for I swear to you, Ermentrude, I will never survive disgrace—dead! My life, you see, my child, is in your hands! Promise—only promise! Oh, girl, can you refuse?"—wringing his limp hands over his white bowed head. "Marry Freyling, and he releases, he helps, he saves me! Refuse, and you kill your father!"

She stood, white and still; all the pretty mirth, all the bright sparkle, fled from her face. In its full horror and loathsomeness this that was entreated forced itself upon her as a horror that must be. She could not disbelieve the earnestness, the agony of the old man at her feet.

Misdoubting her silence, Mr. Bayliss went over and over again in fuller details his wretched story. Weak man, he had long trembled on the verge of ruin, but believing, as he did still, that none of his fellow-creatures suspected it, he had sought the help of the rich owner of Freyling Place when he appeared in the neighborhood, and had, by accepting his deceptive aid, placed himself in the power of one instead of many, and that one a man who was hard and merciless.

"I will give you an answer to-morrow evening," Ermentrude said to his pleading at last. "Papa, if I can, I will save you. Dear, I cannot bear to see you look like that!"

Then she kissed him, and went straight to her room.

Not even Flora saw her again that night, nor early in the morn'g, when she went forth long before breakfast to the beach.

It was nearly a fortnight since the entertainment at Freyling Place, and never once since that evening had Ermentrude seen Eberhard Windeley.

The French lessons had ceased; he was not to be found on the cliff nor in the village. She believed he had left Gloster, but was too shy to ask.

This morning, however, scanning all the active groups of young men on the beach, in the longing hope that she might see the tall figure, the close-cut dark hair, and well-held head she knew so well, she jostled against old Dan Hector.

"Looking for your sweetheart? Beg parding, miss; Mr. Windeley, I should say." He greeted her with a malicious grin. "You'll have to use your eyes to the want of him, I reckon. He ain't coming back to Gloster no more."

"You always know more of other people's business than of your own, Hector," she returned, calmly.

"Lor', I excuse your being a bit vexed," said the old man, grinning again. "You naturally miss that y ung good-looking chap as you was always a-talking to, don't you, miss? But he had got to leave Gloster; he had made the place too hot to hold him, he had. It's not his fault as he's run away from you, miss. The perlice would have been on his track in a day longer, they say. No, you ain't like to see him again in a hurry; and it is good riddance of bad rubbish—ain't it, miss?"

She turned abruptly from him and walked hurriedly on, and the next person she met was John Mills's wife, the woman with whom Windeley had lodged; so, stopping to talk to her, Ermentrude managed to inquire, in what she thought a matter-of-fact way:

"Have you lost your lodger, Mary?"

"Well, miss, I reckon we have. He left us for one night—said he might be two—day after the to-do at Freyling Place, miss; and here's a fortnight all counted, and no word or sign of him. He has left his fishing-nets behind him, sure; but then them was always more for show than for work. Bless you, look at his hands, miss; they'd never done no work. He was not just what he seemed, miss, we are thinking, so pleasant he was, and kind, and liberal, one could not help liking him; but there was something about him we did not know, be very sure of that. As to fishing, that he come here for, miss, why he did not catch the worth of a night's lodging all time he was here. He was always off up to Freyling Place, or somewhere"—the woman stared with a smile into her companion's eyes—"stead of minding his work like the other chaps, you know, and yet he had money enough always. That looked queer, didn't it?"

"It was just a dream," said Ermentrude,



passionately, to herself, as she quitted the gossiping Mrs. Mills, and went on her way—"a sweet, tantalizing dream that I had all to myself, and of which this horrid, miserable, pitiful waking is to be mine only also. But, oh, if I had never dreamt it!"—clasping her hands over her hot, tear-filled eyes—"if I had never dreamt it, I should have been able to bear this hat has come far better! As it is—oh, papa! even for your sake, how can I?—how can I?"

She went on walking faster than she was conscious of in her agitation, until she reached Freyling Place; then she paused at the gates that were closed, glanced through, and saw the huge St. Bernard watching her from his kennel with low growls.

She had come with the full intent of ringing the bell, and asking to see Mr. Freyling; but her courage failed her now that she was really there, and she stood in indecision until the old butler, catching sight of her from his pantry-window, came out and asked, "Can I do anything for you, Miss Bayliss?" respectfully.

She had known old Sam since she was a child. He was the one old servant whom Mr. Freyling had retained in the house on his return from abroad.

The others he had declared were too old for their situations, or too spoiled, or too undesirable in some way, so he had changed them principally for foreigners, behaving very well to the discarded ones, however, by pensioning them off or finding them other situations.

"I want to see Mr. Freyling, Sam," Ermentrude faltered. "No, I would rather not come in, if you will ask him to come out to me."

The man glanced in more concern than surprise at the unmistakable agitation of her pretty features; but knowing his place too well to be presuming, he appeared to notice nothing, and retired with his message.

In a few moments Mr. Freyling came quickly across the courtyard, spoke to Tostig, who leaped at his chain as he passed, and extending both hands impressively to Ermentrude, said, "My dear Miss Bayliss—this honor! Come in, I entreat you. There is nothing wrong at home, I trust?"

"Will you just walk round the cliff with me, Mr. Freyling? I want to speak to you. There is nothing very wrong, only—only," said Ermentrude, dashing at her subject in the impulsive way natural to her, "papa told me last evening, Mr. Freyling, that—that he wanted—you wanted—me to marry you. And so I came up to—to—"

Into Mr. Freyling's countenance came a softening tenderness, which proved that if there was a capability of love in his heart, this girl, with her winning beauty, her frank, bewitching manners, had surely roused it.

He stopped (they were walking, as Ermentrude had suggested, toward the cliff) gathered up both her hands in his, and said, in the most natural way she had heard him speak yet, "To tell me you will bless me as I desire. I don't think you will ever regret it, Ermentrude. You shall be the happiest woman in the world. Every wish shall be gratified, for I have money enough to give you everything you can want, and have the will to give you everything you can possibly desire."

"Then give me my freedom!" she begged, timidly. "I only want that from you, Mr. Freyling. I thank you very much for the honor you have done me; but I think it is best to be plain-spoken in a matter like this. I do not care for you as a woman ought to care for her husband, and I am very sure I never could care for you one bit more than I do now. I should be simply miserable if I married you,"—forgetting expedience in truthfulness. "We should be a miserable couple. Oh, do set me free!"

He dropped her fingers, and into his features came a cold obstinacy.

"You are in no bonds to me, Miss Bayliss. I hardly understand this tragedy—this appeal."

"It is an appeal to your compassion, your generosity, your kindness," she sobbed. "I don't want to marry you."

"You are certainly plain spoken," sneered he, while an evil look settled over his countenance. "Very well, then; if you don't want to marry me, I cannot force you so to do. So the matter ends, I believe."

"But how about papa?" questioned she, timidly.

"Between the father of my honored wife and the parent of the girl who, with needless insult, refuses my love and name, there is, even you will be able to perceive, a vast difference, Miss Bayliss. They are merely business relations between the latter and myself, and in business no such thing as mercy is known, Miss Bayliss."

The triumph in his low tones made her turn sick with fear.

"You will show no compassion to my father? You will crush him, as I know you have the power to do? No request, no entreaty, no imploring of mine or his will move you in the least?" she asked, studying his expression intently; and he thought he had never seen anything so lovely as those star-like, earnest eyes, that face white with repressed feeling, those lips quivering like an unhappy child's so near his own.

"Under certain circumstances, a word, a look from you would command any, all actions of mine," he returned, meaningly. "But under other circumstances, Miss Bayliss (such is the obstinacy of human nature), I fear the



same looks or words from you would but provoke me to go further in a contrary direction."

He laughed as he said it.

She paused. She looked round upon the glittering sea, the bright sky, the calm, unpitying sun. Nothing to help her anywhere; no friend to prevent the sacrifice, no voice to advise; only the leaden conviction that if one must be sacrificed it must be herself, not her old father, and she felt the sacrifice from one or the other would be exacted to the full by the man beside her.

One last appeal she tried despairingly.

"Mr. Freyling, for your own sake think better of this. How can you care to have a wife who tells you candidly she marries you only because she is compelled?"

"You have told me a great deal too much candidly," he retorted, savagely. "I will have you at any price, though, Ermentrude,"—in softer manner he took her hand—"I will forgive all if you will but consent to be mine. I promise you shall never have cause to regret it. Think! On the one side poverty, disgrace, misery; on the other love, money, your father's safety and happiness! Will you marry me?"

"Love!"—she shuddered as he passed a possessive arm around her. "Money! I hate—I fairly loathe it! But my father's safety and happiness! Yes, Mr. Freyling, I will marry you; and—and I will be as good a wife as I can. I mean—I—"

She hesitated, white as death and trembling from head to foot. They had reached a nook in the cliff where she and Eberhard Windeley had sat one evening with a French book, and there, now on the shingle, lay a leaf that had dropped from it.

Only a senseless bit of black and white paper, but it brought to the girl's mind, vividly to agony, the contrast between what might have been and what *was*. Her words failed, and she stopped, with her face hidden.

"My darling,"—the owner of Freyling Place bent over her—"my love is enough to compel some return; but I can wait, Ermentrude, for that. I am in no hurry for what *must* come in time. I have your own pledged word; I shall soon have your own precious self; and for the rest—I am a patient man—I can wait, I say."

## CHAPTER VI.

"YOU DESPISE ME."

"LAWKS! if there ain't that Windeley chap turned up again!" Old Dan Hector shielded his yellow eyes from the sun as he peered over the cliff to the beach below. "That's him, sure as a herring, a-talking to the butler from Freyling Place. Now where has he been all these weeks, I should just like to know? Evening, mate." He raised his cracked voice shrilly.

"You are a sight for sore eyes, you are, a-turning up again when we made sure the bottom of the ocean, or, mayhap, the lock-up, had got you. Heard the news about your sweet—Miss Bayliss, I should say, eh? Hope he ain't," he added to himself, with a grin. "And won't I break it to him kindly!"

"Don't shout across from a mile's distance, like a lunatic," responded Windeley, crossly. "Come down here, man, if you expect me to talk to you."

"Ain't heard," chuckled Hector, hobbling down with the obedience of malice. "Can't speak decently yet to an honest fisherman, can't he? But I've got one for him now though, I know, for I've watched him a-looking at her, when she did not know, as if she was sugar. Come to the wedding, I suppose,"—louder as he approached the men on the beach. "Hopes they will invite yer to the breakfast, as yer was on such good terms with Miss Bayliss, eh? Don't yer be too sartin of it, my boy, for I should not like for yer to be disappointed. She ain't her own mistress now, yer know; and Freyling is as proud and stuck up as—as you are. Likely they won't have a fisher chap like you among their grand party, fine as yer are in yer *own* opinion, eh?"

"What is the old magpie chattering about?"

Eberhard turned carelessly to the servant at his side.

"The old magpie, as you calls him," said Hector, spitefully—"you would get on better if some one would give yer sense enough to keep a civil tongue in your head, I'm thinking—is only chattering about the news all Gloster knows by heart—the grand marriage as is to be between Mr. Freyling and Miss Bayliss next week, Mr. Windeley, as yer calls yerself."

"When Gloster is in want of news, it employs you to manufacture some, does it not?" asked Eberhard, negligently taking a seat on the rock.

"But I ain't manufactured this," grinned the other, maliciously. "Ask Mr. Sam, if you doubt a honest fisherman's word, if his master and Miss Ermentrude isn't going to be wed next week. Lor', yer did not think she would wait for a nobody like you, did yer now, when a rich man came courting as soon as your back was turned? Lor', well, if yer ain't a soft! Ha, ha, ha!"

White and stern, Eberhard rose to his feet, looking from the grinning, triumphant physiognomy of Hector to the averted, pitying one of the old butler.

"Sam"—he turned to the latter—"is this old reprobate speaking the truth for once in his life?"

"Leave off calling a honest fisherman names, and look, can't you, Mr. Windeley, as yer calls yourself," answered Dan, maliciously.



"He do feel it," chuckled he to himself. "Yonder, coming down the cliffs, is the very persons," he continued, in triumph, aloud. "Ain't they lovers, now?—ain't they looking sweet?—she hanging on his arm like that, and he hanging his head like a parrot and chirruping over her! Ay, stare at 'em as if yer eyes were marbles, but don't expect her to take any notice of yer now. Your day is over, mate, He is rich, remember, Freyling is."

Not hearing the vulgar taunts, heedless of the sneering grins, Eberhard stood watching the couple approaching.

Lovers they could only be from their attitude, her hand resting on his arm and clasped by his fingers; his head bent spoonily until it almost touched hers, and his words need be only whispers—whispers, with a good many terms of endearment about them, as the watchers caught in passing.

Freyling was altogether too preoccupied to notice they were passing any one, until his companion gave a faint, startled exclamation; then he glanced, deigned a lordly nod of recognition to Hector, and espying Eberhard, said, and he stopped condescendingly to say it:

"Ah, Windeley, turned up again? Glad to see you back among us, my man. Wherever I meet honest industry and sterling pluck, I like to encourage them; and unless I mistake greatly, in you, young man, there is plenty of those genuine articles. We want as many such men in Gloster as we can get; therefore"—pompously—"we welcome you back, Windeley."

"You are most flattering," returned the young man, quietly.

His unmoving glance—stern, contemptuous, searching—was riveted on Ermentrude; she, crimson one instant with shame, white the next with fear or pain—Eberhard could not determine which—kept her gaze fixed on the ground; but, though not meeting them, those dark, scornful eyes thrilled her through and through.

"Lawks! ain't their faces as good as a play, now!" observed old Hector, tuning his voice so that it only reached Windeley's and Ermentrude's ears.

"Shall we move on, Mr. Freyling?" Ermentrude suggested, falteringly. "I—I think it is chilly standing"—with a shiver.

"Chilly, my dear one! It is the hottest night we have had this summer. Patience—one moment." Then he turned patronizingly to Eberhard again. "I hope, Windeley, we may have the pleasure of seeing you at the rejoicings at Freyling Place next week. I intend to *fete* the neighborhood, rich and poor alike"—boastfully—"in as lavish a manner as my humble means will allow, on the occasion of my—ahem!—my marriage. No doubt you have heard from your friends here"—indicat-

ing the butler and Dan—"the—ahem!—the good news."

"I understand you are to marry Miss Bayliss," the young man returned, calmly, his gaze still holding Ermentrude, and deepening into scorn. "I should like to congratulate the lady on her good taste, if she would allow me."

"I must go home alone, if you persist in gossiping here." Ermentrude, angrily addressing Freyling, moved on a few paces alone. "It is insufferable to be kept standing like this"—turning crimson cheeks and flashing eyes upon him, which he pompously deemed it his duty to correct.

"Dearest, I do not approve of this display of pride," said he, puffing a little as he overtook her fleet steps. "That young man, Windeley, though not in your own station, has nevertheless feelings, my dear, which you may have wounded. He meant nothing presumptuous in venturing his congratulations just now; a little want of manners—nothing more. Now, I should like you to go back and speak a civil word or two to him, while I just go down to the beach with old Hector. It becomes me, Ermentrude, to be on good terms with these honest sons of toil."

He put his hand on the girl's arm, and led her back as he spoke.

In spite of his showy devotion, he lost no opportunity of bending her will to his.

Perhaps he thought a little training before marriage good for the course he meant his wife to undergo after.

He stalked off, patronizing old Hector; and Sam, the butler, drew aside respectfully.

Brought back to speak civilly to an inferior, Ermentrude stood trembling like a culprit.

Eberhard, lounging on the rock, paid no attention to her, did not appear conscious that she was before him.

The sea murmured placidly beneath; the sun slanted on her pink gown. Somewhere away some birds were singing, and in the village happy children were at play, with shouts and laughter.

"Mr. Windeley!" the girl began, desperately; then paused.

He turned, rose, and stood towering over her in his grand height.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Bayliss; can I do anything for you?"

"How—how is your arm? You have it out of the sling, I see."

"My arm? Oh, much better, thanks. I can use it slightly."

"You—you have been away for some time," she went on, interestingly. "We—we thought you were not coming back any more."

"Indeed!"—with the same haughty and freezing indifference in tone and glance. "How kind of you to think of me at all!"



"Why do you look and speak to me thus?" exclaimed she, the impulse of misery sweeping momentarily away remembrance of everything but itself; "as if, as if—"

"Not as if I had forgotten that vast difference between our social positions that your betrothed"—he smiled there—"understands and defines so perfectly," he finished for her, mockingly. "You surely don't mean to insinuate that, Miss Bayliss? How would you—and he—wish me to speak and look? I stand respectfully ready for any order."

"I don't want you to speak or look at me at all," faltered she, raising miserably her pleading eyes, great tears dimming their violet depths. She was such a child still, pride and self-control gave way to pain. "I never want to see you again if everything is to be so—so different now. Mr. Windeley, we were such good friends before—before you went away!"

"Ah, 'Then and now,'" he quoted, carelessly. "There is some song about that, isn't there, Miss Bayliss? Do you sing it?"

She fought for a voice, but had not one. She turned her eyes, with their great scalding tears, to the hard, unsympathetic rock—not one whit harder or more unsympathetic, to outward appearance, than the flesh and blood by her side.

"Unequal friendships, like unequal marriages," continued Eberhard, calmly, "are the greatest mistakes under the sun. Ask your gude man there if he does not think so. You were very kind to me, Miss Bayliss, before I went away; but, of course, our friendship was a hideous mistake."

"It need not have been," brokenly. "We might be good friends always; only—only I believe"—passionately—"you despise me now from the very bottom of your heart!"

"I believe I do!" sternly, but there was a something about his tone telling that his control might fail. "A girl who could bring herself to even contemplate the marrying a coarse, ignoble rascal like that"—pointing to Mr. Freyling's back; "a girl who could so deceive me as to make me think her the ideal of refinement, nobility, purity, when all the time money was her loftiest idea, and sordid worldliness her character, deserves most thoroughly to be despised, I think. How else but with contempt could I regard you after what I have heard and seen this morning?"

"Mr. Windeley—oh, I am so wretched!" she moaned.

She had not meant to give way, even before his scorn; had not meant to appeal to his pity; nor to sink down in a heap on the rock, with her hands flung over her sobbing face; but then we so seldom act as we meant to do in any great emergency, especially if taken by surprise.

And Mr. Freyling's back was but a few yards away; but then Mr. Freyling's back was broad, and turned toward his sweetheart, and Mr. Freyling's loud voice was too sonorously patronizing a group of fishermen around him to make it likely that his betrothed's faint accents would be overheard. Mr. Freyling was going in for popularity.

"I dare say you are wretched," said Eberhard, slowly; and he knelt by her so as to shield her from the beach as he spoke. "But, then, to my notions, people who put gold before everything generally are, and deserve to be, wretched."

"I have not put gold before everything," sobbed she.

"Ermentrude, what are you doing?" (Flora Maynard, unperceived by either, had strolled up behind them on the cliff.) "I came to meet you, as I thought, taking a stroll with your future husband"—she dashed these words, and looked at Eberhard as she did so—"not making an exhibition of yourself in this nice public spot. I declare if you sit a moment longer on that stone with those red eyes, looking so stupid, I will shake you! I should think you find that shingle rather sharp for your knees, Mr. Windeley."

"You don't mean to say a lady of your keenness of perception could make such a mistake as to take your cousin and myself for lovers?" retorted he, smilingly.

"I said nothing about my cousin! You look absurd enough for anything!" retorted she, sharply. "Mr. Windeley," lowering her tones, and standing between him and Ermentrude, "I was praising you only to-day for the noble way in which you had kept your promise to me and left Gloster. Knowing what I knew, perhaps I was foolish to expect an honest preservation of the bargain from you; but I will appeal to your honor, your manliness, once again! Go away now, until after next week! Have you no regard for her, poor child?"

"Ladies are scoffers at business," returned he, smilingly. "But it is true, none the less, Miss Maynard, that I have just now a little business in Gloster, which renders it imperative for me to stop here! I am awfully sorry to be disoblige!"

"Scamp!" she said, in as fierce anger as a whisper would hold. "You have no sense of honor, nor generosity, nor—nor anything! But I won't be beaten by you! If you break your part of our bargain—very well, then, I just go straight to Mr. Freyling and tell him what I saw the night of the *fete*. I dare say you will be put in prison for it! I believe it was a criminal proceeding!"

"I bow to your superior legal knowledge!" he laughed. "Pardon me, Miss Maynard,



however, I have not broken my half of our respectable bargain. I never promised—at least, unless my memory fails me—to leave Gloster. I went because business called me away; now I stop because it bids me remain.”

Miss Maynard looked round anxiously at Ermentrude before she spoke again.

The latter had wandered a few steps away, and stood desolately looking toward the sea.

Such a child she seemed, drying her eyes, and hanging her head in shame; such a lovely, bright-haired, bewitching child.

Eberhard's glance softened as he followed the direction of Flora's, and that lady was quick to note it.

“You care for her,” she urged, softly; “I know you do, though whether more than for your own amusement I want you to prove! You promised me to do all in your power to make her mistress of Freyling Place. Of course, when you left Gloster, you took the best means to bring about that; but if you come and upset everything just now before the wedding, think of the harm that you will do that child!—the scandal, the trouble!”

“You credit me with more power than I knew that I possessed. How am I likely to upset this desirable match?” he said, bitterly. “If she could forget me in a few weeks sufficiently to pretend to love another man, you need scarcely fear, I think, that one interview with me will make her throw over that other man. I fancy she has almost as strong an idea of the relative values of gold and affection as yourself. Besides, affection!”—he laughed, scornfully; “you are the only person whose head it has entered that she was ever likely to have any affection for me.”

“Perhaps I imagined it,” said Miss Maynard, quietly; “but such scenes as I came upon just now would soon break off an engagement with a jealous and particular man like Mr. Freyling, whether they signified affection or merely lunacy.”

Then she turned from him, took her cousin's arm, and led her unresistingly away.

Windeley gazed for a few moments after them, then went across to Sam Ford, who had taken a seat at some little distance.

“Sam,” he said, hastily, “I have decided; we will try that thing to-night. I will be at the court-yard gates at two o'clock; the house is sure to be sound asleep by that time—eh?”

“Two o'clock? Very good, sir; I will meet you at that hour precise,” said Sam. “Yes, sir; I think all is pretty sure to be quiet by then; but an idea has been coming to me while you've been away, that I'll get the house-keeper (she is a special friend of mine) to persuade him to change his room to-night. If she turns his own topsy-turvy—as the women-folks love to do, and call it cleaning, Mr. Eberhard—and damp the boards a bit, he will soon take

fright, and go off to the green-room at the other end of the corridor. It would be safer; he is but a light sleeper, and the safe is in the room joining his ordinary one—you know, sir, the safe you want to search.”

“It would be a good plan,” said Windeley. “You can rely, I suppose, on this special friend of yours? She won't say a word to rouse his suspicions?”

“I'll manage that, sir. At the library window, then, sir, I meet you at two o'clock precise.”

“Thanks. Get the household off to bed as early as you can, the master especially. There is scarcely any risk; but it will be as well to observe any precaution you can think of. I should like this managed entirely between you and me, if possible. You are a sterling old soul, Sam. I hope to pay my debt to you without delay after this, if all goes as I hope.”

“I wish you success from the bottom of my heart, Mr. Eberhard—speedy success. Not that I want any payment—bless you, no!”

He held out his hand, and the young man grasped it, as emotion stole into the old one's voice.

“For you—the boy as I've dandled on my knee twenty-five years ago—I would do a deal more than this, sir, and think it no trouble.”

“Who are these coming—some arrivals?” said Windeley, looking toward the village.

“Why, that lady stepping this way, Mr. Eberhard, is that one as was wrecked, and stopped at Laurel Villa so long afterwards—that tall, dark, sad-looking woman.”

“It is Miss Carnarvon,” returned Windeley, surprised, and advanced to meet her.

Miss Carnarvon was unfeignedly glad to see him. She grasped his hand, and said it was on his account entirely she had come to Gloster, though she had scarcely hoped to find him with so little trouble; but she had heard of a good situation that she thought might suit him, in a vessel going out whale-fishing, and she proceeded to describe its advantages, and urged him to look after it as speedily as might be. Not being sure of his address, she had deemed it speedier to come than to write.

“Thanks!” he said, warmly. “You are, indeed, a good soul! But I have a situation that I think would suit me better before my eye at present, and nearer home. If I fail in obtaining that, I will remember your kindness, and look after this one that you propose.”

Miss Carnarvon regarded him searchingly.

“You are averse to leaving Gloster, perhaps, Mr. Windeley. By the way, can the news I heard in the 'bus as I came, that Miss Bayliss is going to marry Mr. Freyling next week, be true? It seems very sudden. Is it a suitable match? Likely to be a happy one, do you think?”

He took her hand, and led her toward the



path to the beach. Mr. Freyling was just coming up it, having patronized the fishermen to his heart's content, and remembering the possibility of Ermentrude's growing weary of waiting.

"Yonder is the man," said he, laconically. "If May and December, brightness and mystery, innocence and rascality, are fit mates, then in every way is this match a suitable one, and likely to be happy!"

Miss Carnarvon looked down as Eberhard indicated, and Mr. Freyling at the same moment looked up. For an instant their eyes held each other's as if too fascinated to move, then Miss Carnarvon sprang forward with a cry of joy.

"Do the dead return to life? William, is it you?" she said.

## CHAPTER VII.

### "MISTAKEN IDENTITY."

"Did you address those questions to me, madam?"

Mr. Freyling recovered himself instantly, finished his ascent, and approached Miss Carnarvon with great politeness; and no shade of anything unusual about him except, perhaps, a peculiar expression round the lips.

"I cannot say it has been *my* good fortune as yet to meet any dead people who have returned to life; but, of course, I cannot vouch for the experience of everybody. Madam, I am not William, whoever he may be. I am grieved you should be disappointed."

"I should know your voice among a thousand!" cried the woman, more violently agitated than Windeley would have believed that reserved, quiet woman could have been. "Oh, William, why did you let me think you dead? What have you been doing these months that I have mourned for you? My dear, is it no pleasure to you—you look so cold and grave—no joy again to see your poor—"

"It is a great pleasure to make your acquaintance for the first time," interrupted he, civilly. "My name is Edward Freyling; at your service, madam. Yours is—"

He paused, invitingly.

"What does the man mean?" cried poor Miss Carnarvon, looking round at Windeley watching the scene with no atom of expression in his countenance, and then at the sea and sky. "Is not he going to own me? Has he lost his memory? Is he mad?"

"Not at all, madam," Freyling bowed, courteously. "As you have not as yet volunteered your name, I cannot search in memory's stores for it; but your features I most distinctly assert to be entirely and completely unknown to me. I cannot recall"—he paused, and

looked thoughtfully down for a few moments, as if in polite anxiety to gratify her evident desire for recognition—"I cannot recall ever having met you before."

"My name! What should it be but your own?" cried she, emphatically, coming nearer to him, and gazing into the dark, hard visage.

"Indeed!" in puzzled surprise. "You are Miss Freyling? Some relation whom I ought to know? Pardon me, but, upon my life, your face is strange, and yet I think it is one to be easily remembered after once beholding. You have so entirely the advantage over me." He shrugged his shoulders, helplessly. "You must be misled by some extraordinary likeness, Miss Freyling, if that indeed be your name."

"I am not to be misled by fool's play like this! Your relation!—you know as well as I do what relation I am to you, William Carnarvon!"

Her voice trembled a little.

"Excuse me—Edward Freyling," he bowed.

"And you know my name as well as your own," she went on, unheedingly—Janet Carnarvon! This is a sorry joke, William, and you act it badly. It is not so long since we parted that you can pretend to have lost memory of the years you and I lived together. A sorry joke, indeed, to welcome home like this one who has done so much and borne so much for you as I have, William!"

"I wish I knew where the joke lay!" cried he, in exasperation. "If you consider you are making it, let me tell you it may be carried a little too far. My temper is not angelic."

"I know," she nodded; "it never was. Neither is mine—point of resemblance there."

"This grows impertinent—annoying!" His features began to work, and his lips whiten. "I have treated you, so far, as a lady laboring under an erroneous impression; but a lady would not annoy. You must be either a lunatic escaped from some asylum, whose keeper ought to be sought for, or an impostor, whom, if any further persecution is attempted, I shall give in charge of the police."

His eyes flashed evilly, but they never met hers. They flashed all ways from her steady gaze, that never wandered from him.

"You dare to insult—to disown me!" she cried, her temper leaping, quick as a tiger's spring, into her voice. "Take care, William; a warm friend makes a bitter enemy, and I've done and borne for you what no other woman alive would have endured. But I may be tried too far. For the last time of asking"—she laughed unsteadily as she put a pleading hand on his arm, "will you say this was just a joke to tease me, and—and that you are really glad to see me again?"

She was giving way, he thought, like a cruel coward.



Shaking off her touch as if it had been a viper's, he said, loudly, "If you do not go your way instantly, woman, and leave me in peace, the lockup shall hold you to-night for a certainty. A man in my position—master of Freyling Place, is not to be annoyed with impunity, you shall find. Leave me, woman!"

"Oh, you are master of Freyling Place, are you?" sneered she, a cloud, evil as his own, gathering over her brow, her tightened lips twitching. "And you with money, and house, and power to boast of, think me, in poverty—homeless and helpless, perhaps—no fit mate for you now, eh?" Then, her tone changing quickly. "You won't, even for the sake of what has been, ask me home to your abundance—give me food and shelter for one night?"

"Make yourself very sure that I will not!" hissed he. "Be off, woman! Don't carry this absurd scene any further!"

She went a step nearer to him, fearlessly, and stared steadily at him.

Eberhard, standing but a few steps away, was forgotten and unseen by both of them.

"You are playing a deep game, William," said the woman—"a deeper one than I can fathom all in a moment; but get to the bottom of it I assure you I will! As you seem to think you can afford to make an enemy of me, be it so. You are planning a gay marriage for yourself, I hear—a most fitting marriage truly between an innocent child and such as you—and you believe that I will stand quietly by while that goes on. You must have lost all the little sense you ever had. I will stop this marriage. Mark you that, my grateful William! I will put a stop to it!"

"How, madam?"

He could not have uttered more than those two words had his life depended on three.

His gaze, deepening, burned with fury; his hands were clinched as they hung by his side.

"All in good time!" laughed she, turning on her heel, and drawing her shawl neatly round her. "I am not in the habit of showing my cards before I play them; but you shall not be kept waiting too long. I promise you that, gay William! Good-day, my dear!"

Freyling took a step forward as if he would have seized her.

Eberhard, noting his expression, quietly advanced a step; and the master of Freyling Place changed countenance, and paused.

"Have you heard this extraordinary creature?" he asked, smiling, but failing altogether to conceal anxiety. "A being more mad it was never my lot to encounter. I must take measures for her removal. A man in my position cannot be persecuted like this, can he?"

"I should say not," returned Windeley, moving on in the direction Miss Carnarvon had taken,

The master of Freyling Place stood an instant, gazed all round, then swiftly, as if seven-leagued boots had been on his feet, strode off toward his house.

That house lay wrapped in silence as midnight sounded from the village church tower.

Not a bird nor a dog disturbed the calm, sweet stillness of the summer night.

The whole neighborhood seemed asleep.

Away in the village no lights gleamed; no sound but the gentle murmuring of the waves arose.

Freyling Place stood brown and quiet, with no light in any of its numerous windows, except one, and that one was a window looking into the most lonely part of the grounds, the window of the green chamber, in which Mr. Freyling sat with papers and ink on the table before him, his hand supporting his head, his gaze fixed on one spot in the carpet, and evidently absorbed in the deepest thought. It was not pleasant thought, if one might judge from his knitted brow, the occasional restless movement of the hands; but it was so wholly absorbing that one o'clock struck without his heeding it, and the silence went on unbroken until two strokes fell from the stable clock, and were caught up and echoed by various toned clocks within the house. Still Mr. Freyling never stirred.

It was Sam the butler's business to see that every door and window of the house was securely fastened before the household retired to rest; but surely that trustworthy servant had strangely neglected his duties to-night, for with a gentle touch the heavy gate of the court-yard opened, and a man from outside entered as the clocks were striking two.

Tostig roused with a warning, quick growl as the intruding footstep caught his ear; but the man went across to him, patted his shaggy head, spoke his name with a few caressing words, and the animal, wagging his tail, laid down again instantly, watchful but contented.

Quietly through the second doors and round, as one who thoroughly knew his way, the intruder bent his steps along the terrace, across the dewy lawn, and among the dark-looking beds of mignonette and geranium, until he paused at the study window.

As he tapped, it opened noiselessly, and a light glimmering forth showed Sam Ford's features.

"Come in, Mr. Eberhard; it is all right, sir. You are as punctual as time itself," said the servant.

Then he led the way, as for an honored guest, out of the room, across the old oaken hall, with its decorations of stags' antlers, up the broad state staircase, along thickly-carpeted corridors, and through noiseless baize-covered doors, until they reached the ante-room of the chamber Mr. Freyling usually occupied,



"He ain't here, sir," said Sam; "he is in the green room, right at the other end, so you can take your time, and search thoroughly."

He carried the light over to the huge brass-bound oaken chest, that was nearly as high as himself.

Taking a bunch of keys from his pocket, Eberhard examined the lock.

"I had these made from the waxen impressions, Sam," he said. "Hurrah! it fits capitally. Now, what is inside?"

Papers, papers—papers, it seemed, and papers only, neatly arranged in their respective pigeon-holes, labeled and ticketed; no vestige of money, nor plate, nor any valuable such as is usually accounted as worthy of search by a burglar.

Mr. Freyling evidently kept those elsewhere, but Windeley seemed quite contented with what he found, for he uttered an exclamation of joy as he drew forth one musty, aged packet of letters and copies of registers, apparently.

"Here is what I want, Sam," he said, thrusting them securely into his breast-pocket, and buttoning his coat over them. "We need spend no more time here now."

As he locked the chest up again, and removed the key, there sounded the faint opening of a door at some distance, but Eberhard and his companion were too interested to hear it.

As they stood looking at a desk lying on the table, a slow footstep came along the passage, but neither noticed it, until Eberhard, glancing toward the door ajar, saw upon it the flicker of an approaching light.

"Hide, Sam!" he whispered, pressing the old man's arm, and pointing to that sign of some one coming.

"Mercy on us!" ejaculated the servant, and retired behind the curtain, whisking out the candle he held as he did so.

There was only the one curtain, and no place in the apartment for Eberhard to retire into; but that careless, strong young man hardly looked as if hiding from any eye were a likely amusement of his.

He stood quietly leaning against the table, and watched, as Mr. Freyling, in dressing-gown and slippers, with a candle in his hand, and still that thoughtful cloud upon his brow, entered and approached the bookcase.

He put up his hand to select the book he wanted, but as he touched it some instinct made him turn and glance uneasily round the room; and when he saw that figure dimly outlined before the window's light, standing tall and motionless within a few inches of him, he uttered an exclamation of fear.

"Good-evening, Mr. Freyling," said Windeley, quietly moving and putting himself be-

tween Freyling and the bell-rope hanging by the side of the fire-place.

"It is you, is it?" Freyling, fixing his piercing gaze on the young man, recovered composure (or appeared to recover it) with an effort. "So you have come to this, Windeley?"

"So it appears," said the other, to fill up the pause.

"I always suspected you were hanging about here for not much good, but scarcely expected burglary of you."

Another pause; then, assuming more bluster of manner with each word, but growing very white as he noted how the other had intercepted the bell and the fire-irons:

"Come, my fine fellow, now you are fairly caught, I advise you to make a clean breast of it. Put down, without more ado, whatever you may have got of mine, tell me honestly who are your accomplices—you never got in here alone—and then perhaps I may be induced, remembering your youth and former display of courage, to deal leniently with you."

"You are very kind." It was impossible for Freyling to determine if the humility of this midnight intruder was unfeigned or satirical. "I have nothing of yours in my possession. I came for nothing of yours, Mr. Freyling. As to accomplices—well, I have none to help me now, sir. It is man to man, if you are thinking of personal chastisement for this (as you may call it) liberty I have taken."

He smiled, secure in conscious strength as he spoke.

Mr. Freyling was also a powerful man; but he glanced over that muscularly graceful, lightly active figure before him, and the thought of single combat went out of his head.

Windeley was still standing before the bell.

"You have the impudence of a dozen thieves," Freyling said, with angry surprise. "I must ascertain that none of my spoons are about you, or packed up outside. You thought that a likely place for valuables, I dare say, young fellow," pointing to the brass bound chest; "but a little difficult to open, no doubt, you found it, or did I interrupt you a minute too soon, eh?" sneeringly.

"Not at all," responded Eberhard, politely. "I was just thinking of withdrawing as you came in. I will not intrude now on you any longer. May I have your light to guide me down-stairs?" stretching out his hand.

"You think I am going to let you escape scot free, at your own time, without searching you, a burglar whom I have caught in my house?" cried Freyling, fairly aghast at the other's coolness.

"Pardon me; you misstate the case. I tell you, on my word of honor, that I have nothing



of yours in my possession. I will certainly not submit to be searched, and will leave you now, for it was not to interview you that I came."

"I believe you there. Seven years' penal servitude, young fellow, you might expect for this night's business; but"—he lowered his voice and looked round; no movement came from the curtain, behind which Sam Ford crouched; all was still quiet outside—"but,"—Mr. Freyling moved a few steps nearer Windeley, with his keen eyes still on him—"but I am in want of a man after your fashion just now—a rascal of your stamp" (with a short laugh), "to carry out successfully a little design of mine that may require such qualities."

"You flatter."

"You were standing by, I think, on the cliff this evening, when I had an interview with a curious woman—Miss Carnarvon, she called herself."

"I overheard from beginning to end of a most curious interview. Miss Carnarvon insinuated some rather unpleasant things about you, it struck me," said Windeley.

"Yes," replied Mr. Freyling, calmly, "that I was not free to marry Miss Bayliss, and that she, Janet Carnarvon, had a legal claim on my home and name. My pretended non-recognition of that woman was of course pretense. Her sudden appearance took me by surprise, and I acted unwisely in the impulse which prompted me to disown and defy her, and there only remains one course open to me. I wish her to be taken temporarily out of my way, and do not mistake, I think, when I fancy this is a thing you, Windeley, could manage cleverly for me."

"In what way?" asked the listener, laconically.

"I will send a message to ask her to meet me to-morrow night as the dusk falls on the beach. You must have a boat in readiness; you meet her, throw a cloak or something over her head, carry her off to the boat, and thence by it to a steamer which I will arrange shall be in waiting under the cliff; then give her chloroform, or a drug, or manage how you like; but keep her quiet until the steamer has run you up the coast of Maine. You will have no trouble about the matter; no questions will be asked. I arrange all that. Take the woman up to Bangor and get her nice lodgings; have her in every way treated in the kindest manner, but take care that she has no money in her pocket to come back with. Watch her, and keep her there until this day week, my wedding-day, is over. After that I will write to you, and give further instructions. Here,"—he unlocked the drawer of his desk, and took out a roll of bank-notes; then locking it again hurriedly, handed the money to Eberhard,

"You shall have as much again when your task is satisfactorily completed. What do you say? Decide quickly, for I have had another man in my thoughts. If you won't, he will."

"This business you propose will do her no harm?" questioned Windeley, slowly.

"I swear it won't. Janet Carnarvon is not my wife—I swear it!"

"I may as well undertake this affair as the other man you speak of," said Eberhard, after another moment or two of reflection. "And the reward! Thanks. I understand perfectly, and bid you good-evening, Mr. Freyling."

"Good-evening," said Freyling, slowly, going before him with the light down-stairs. "I think we understand each other thoroughly, eh? Oh, this is the window you came in by, is it?"

"This was my entrance," said Windeley, coolly, stopping at the study. "I need not trouble you to attend me any further, sir."

Mr. Freyling did not notice that the roll of notes he had given Eberhard had been left by that extraordinary young man among the books upon the study table.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### LISTENERS.

THERE were so many strangers coming to and going from Gloster as the preparations for the wedding of the master of Freyling Place went on, that a certain extra one was scarcely noticed by the excited villagers at first.

He never went near Laurel Villa, so he could have no business there; but he hovered a good deal around Freyling Place, and yet seemed to have no business there. He was a tall, dark, rather gentlemanly-looking man, wearing clothes which tied him to no particular profession, and he inhabited Eberhard Windeley's late lodgings, for that erratic young man had disappeared again, and this time having taken his fishing tackle with him, it was supposed he had gone for good.

His successor was more socially disposed than Windeley had been, and by-and-by as he stayed on in the place made himself noticed, for he talked to everybody.

Meeting Mr. Freyling one afternoon on the sunny cliff, this talkative stranger introduced himself to him.

"It is a very fine day, sir," he observed, putting himself rather in the approaching gentleman's way; but lifting his hat as he did so.

"Very fine," responded Freyling, who was in a hurry, and wished to pass on.

"You are Mr. Freyling, of course," said the communicative one. "You have been pointed out to me a dozen times, sir, as the gentleman who is to be married the day after to-morrow. May I be allowed, sir, to congratulate you on



the coming event? My name is Becker—that is what my name is.”

“Thank you, Mr. Becker; I am much obliged,” said Freyling.

“I admire the style you are doing your house up in immensely, Mr. Freyling; not that I have been able to see very much of it, for in looking round, that dog of yours has alarmed me a good deal. Splendid animal—true St. Bernard, is not he?—but fierce. Now I fancy I must have seen you before, Mr. Freyling, for I remember a dog exactly like that was bought by a gentleman of your name, at Narcot, a little place at the foot of the Alps, you know. Do you know Narcot at all, Mr. Freyling?”

He looked curiously at Freyling as he asked this apparently unimportant question, and saw that gentleman turn livid for one moment, then flush and cloud.

“I cannot spare time for gossip to-day,” said Freyling, but though he spoke sternly, his words were a little indistinct. “I must walk on, my good man.”

“I’ll just walk with you, if you will allow me, sir,” said the obliging Becker. “I’ve been puzzling my head about this dog of yours. How long have you had him?”

“How long? Oh, perhaps a year,” said Freyling, carelessly.

“Exactly. It is just a year this very week since I was at that place I speak of—Narcot. I was sent abroad on a little bit of as disagreeable business, sir, as you can well fancy—a forgery, Mr. Freyling, but the man escaped me. I was desperately annoyed at the time, but rather glad afterward, for I heard that the poor beggar died suddenly very soon after, so he got his punishment, you see, without my help. He was a thorough rascal, but as deep and clever a scoundrel as ever lived, Mr. Freyling, sir, that forger I speak of was!”

“Was he?” returned the master of Freyling Place, in a tone sadly lacking interest. “I am afraid I must walk a little faster than you will care about, Mr. Becker.”

“Any pace suits me,” returned amiable Mr. Becker, brightly quickening his steps to prove his words. “Let me see; you *do* know Narcot, I think you said, Mr. Freyling?”

“I have been there”—hesitatingly. “I have been to most places.”

“Of course you have! Any one can see at glance you are a traveled gentleman. Well, then, Mr. Freyling, you and I have met before. I’ll take the liberty of recalling the circumstances of our meeting to your mind, sir, though I don’t in the least take it amiss your forgetting a common name like mine—Becker, sir; that is what my name is. Now yours, being aristocratic in sound, has kept in my recollection, Mr. Freyling; but Becker, I don’t wonder at its slipping out of yours.”

“Becker? I seem to have some faint remembrance of the name,” said Mr. Freyling, feebly.

“I’ll recall the circumstances, sir, if you’ll allow me,” said Mr. Becker, politely. “You were staying at Narcot for pleasure at the time I speak of, and I came there on business, being a detective in search of a forger. Well, there was a young man called Windeley passing through Narcot. You ain’t listening, I fear, sir?—bored, eh?”—peeping inquisitively round to behold the other’s averted countenance; but Mr. Freyling, with his head bent in an uncomfortable angle toward the sea, muttered that he was listening.

Mr. Becker, being a man of observation, noticed that the hand his companion raised to pass his handkerchief across his forehead trembled; but he was too engrossed in watching his companion, and his companion was too engrossed in watching the waves, for either to notice an old fisherman, slouching along in the same direction as themselves, measuring his steps so that the wind should bring large fragments of their conversation to his ears, kept greedily open for the same. It was only old Dan Hector.

“Getting a little warm, Mr. Freyling. Let us walk a pace slower,” suggested Mr. Becker, considerately. “Well, as I was saying, sir, this young man called Windeley, passing through Narcot, had that dog of yours with him, and you took an enormous fancy for him. Windeley agreed to sell, but you could not agree about the price; so I being slightly known to Windeley, was called into his apartments to value the animal, and it was there, Mr. Freyling, that you met me. I valued the dog, and you bought him at my valuation, and got him cheap, for a magnificent animal he is. Windeley and he parted like two brothers. I think you’ll remember the little occurrence of the detective’s turning into a valuer, if you think back a little. My hunt after and escape of that forger made rather a sensation in that little place, Narcot. My name—Becker, sir—was rather brought forward in connection with the affair, and after you and Windeley had completed your bargain, I remember giving you a little sketch of the business; and you were just for the moment rather painfully interested, Mr. Freyling, don’t you know?—for in my description of the forging rascal I was looking after, you thought you recognized a friend of your own. I hope you were mistaken Mr. Freyling, in that; I have not seen you since to ask you?”

“I was entirely mistaken, thanks,” said Freyling, speaking clearly, but yet without turning his head. “The resemblance was a little striking from your description, I remember; but it was a false alarm. I am a



shocking hand at remembering faces, Mr. Becker. I am short-sighted a little; so you must excuse my not recognizing yours until you recalled those circumstances to me. Now I remember you perfectly, and hope to see you again. I give an entertainment to-morrow—a kind of *fete*, on the eve of my wedding. Will you come to it? I should be very glad; but I must really say good-day now. I am overwhelmed by business.”

Mr. Becker said he should be very glad to avail himself of Mr. Freyling's kind invitation. Mr. Becker returned Mr. Freyling's courteous farewell, and after watching, with a curious smile, the master of Freyling Place's hurried departing steps, Mr. Becker went on the beach to find some one else to converse with.

Meantime, old Dan Hector went slouching and chuckling along to himself until he came upon a shady nook behind a huge, loose, standing mass of rock, where sat Flora Maynard and her cousin, Ermentrude Bayliss, with books in their hands, and the fresh little breeze ruffling their bright hair and ribbons.

Flora had not doubted yet that the fate she was helping to force her cousin into must prove in the end the best for her.

She was aware how this engagement had altered Ermentrude from a bright, lively girl into a quiet, melancholy woman. She saw how her appetite had failed, guessed that she cried half the nights, knew that she took no interest in her elaborate trousseau; nor in the equally elaborate preparations in progress for her reception at the Freyling Place,—knew, indeed, that all the heart, and life, and spirit seemed to have gone out of the girl; but then Mr. Bayliss's heart, and life, and spirit seemed to have taken so many new leases since his daughter's engagement had become an accomplished fact.

His debts were paid, his cares had vanished, his whole demeanor had changed.

“Ermentrude cannot regret *that*!” Flora said to herself; “and by-and-by, when she gets used to her new life and her husband, and has those thousands a-year at her disposal—lucky girl!—she will see matters in their proper light, and brighten up, surely!”

Old Hector paused opposite the two young ladies, made a feint of doffing his woolen cap, and saying, “Good-morning!” Then, smiling maliciously, ventured, “You don't happen to be able to tell me where I could find that Mr. Windeley, as he calls himself, do you, Miss Bayliss?”

“We know nothing about Mr. Windeley,” said Flora, looking up sharply. “You must carry your curiosity elsewhere, Dan Hector.”

“Beg pardon, but I did not point my question at you, miss. You are a lady as keeps yourself to yourself, we know; but Miss Bayliss, here, is more likely than anybody else

to know the whereabouts of a young chap as she was more about with than anybody else. And as to curiosity, miss, when there's likely to be a thumping reward offered for him, I don't see why as an honest fisherman is to be blamed for curiosity because he is anxious, naturally, to be the first as gets it.”

“Who would offer a reward for Mr. Windeley?” said Flora, scornfully.

Ermentrude looked up suddenly, but said nothing.

“Why, that police in gentleman's dress—that ‘detection,’ as he calls himself down in the village—would. Ay, we all guessed Windeley was hiding; but we did not know why until I've just chanced to hear the ‘detection’ talking it over with Mr. Freyling. He is a forger—that is what your fine spark is, Miss Bayliss! He has escaped from no ends of prisons; but this detection is a sharp chap, and he'll have him, ‘special’ if Mr. Freyling helps, as he is likely to do from what I heard. Windeley better not show his face here a-staring at and insulting of honest fishermen any more. That detection will have him sharp as a needle!”

“Is this true, Hector?” said Flora, with interest. “I am not surprised; but—”

“You dare to encourage this horrid falsehood?” cried Ermentrude, rising, trembling and white. “You dare to encourage this back-biting old coward to invent tales against the absent man, who cannot defend himself? You know it is false, Flora! You know you are speaking calumny against a man whom you only hate, Dan Hector, because he is a thousand-fold too brave, too noble, too great for such as you to like! Go away, wicked old story-teller, or the police will have you—have you up for libel! Go away, I tell you; I won't let you speak a word more!”

With her eloquence suddenly dissolving into a tempest of tears, she sunk down by her cousin's side.

Malicious old Hector, thoroughly enjoying her discomfiture, and feeling his slights avenged, went laughing on his way; and Miss Maynard bent, horrified, over the agitated girl.

“Ermentrude, have you no self-respect, no pride? Do you want the whole of Gloster to be informed by old Hector that you are shamefully and passionately in love with a man who never wanted to have anything to do with you?” asked she, using the most stinging words she could think of in order to rouse the other.

“A man who is a scamp; who is a—”

“Don't say a word against him, for I won't endure it!” sobbed Ermentrude. “The whole of Gloster may know the truth if it likes, for the truth is that I love that man, scamp as he may be, careless as I know he is, better than I love my own life!”



"Ermentrude, how dare you make such a disgraceful confession? It is lucky indeed there is only wind and sun to hear"—looking bastily round. "You who are to marry another man in two days, to own that you—"

"I who am too overwhelmed with misery to care for anything else!" Ermentrude cried, in her passion of tears and woe. "I who have borne silently all the horrible pain and crushing misery of this hateful marriage, forced upon me, until I must speak out or break my heart. I must cry out to some one, for I am too wretched to bear it. Flora, I cannot marry Mr. Freyling, when I love Eberhard Windeley with every bit of heart I possess!"

"You must marry Mr. Freyling, when he has paid thousands of dollars for your father's debts, on the sole condition that you should be his wife. You must marry the man to whom you have given your pledged word," said Flora, sternly. "Think of the lovely house, the money, the—"

"The man!" finished Ermentrude, miserably. "I would live with Eberhard in prison, in a hovel, anywhere! I hate—I loathe—I cannot marry Herbert Freyling!"

"You have gone too far to draw back now," said Flora, taking her arm and raising her by main force. "Come home and look at that lovely Brussels lace veil, and that gown of beautiful white, soft silk. If the sight of those would not reconcile you to marry any man, you are not feminine. Lucky, indeed, that nobody was near to hear the dreadful truths you have been blurting out."

What would Miss Maynard have said had she known that, standing behind that sheltering boulder Eberhard Windeley had overheard every word Ermentrude had sobbed forth?

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE EVE OF THE WEDDING.

It was the evening before Mr. Freyling's wedding, and guests and flowers, music and light, dancing feet and merry voices, made bright once again the rooms of Freyling place.

All was successful and princely as it had been before, when Mr. Freyling entertained, only then Miss Bayliss had been the gayest, as well as the loveliest, amid the throng; now she moved by her future husband's side, pale and mirthless, so quiet, so still, with such a heavy depth of trouble for any one to see who looked well into her beautiful azure eyes, that some of the guests who were of a poetical turn of mind declared that in her white dress, with its wreathings of flowers, she looked like a sacrifice.

Others questioned, whisperingly, "Was this as happy a match as it should be? Or could it be that, with all this fair seeming, something clouded lurked behind the scenes?"

The evening wore on to supper-time.

Old Sam, the butler, was strangely agitated to night, and, by making the most unaccountable mistakes throughout the evening, he had somewhat roused his master's non-angelic temper. But vexation is rarely proof against a good meal and champagne; so, when Mr. Freyling rose at the expiration of supper to tell his friends how glad he was to see them, he looked radiant, and like a man who has no wish left ungratified.

He made a nice little carefully-prepared speech, alluding most touchingly to the change in his future life that would take place to-morrow.

Indeed, he was almost overcome by emotion as he mentioned Ermentrude; but the girl herself listened, white and emotionless, as she had been all the evening.

Then some one rose up to propose the bride-elect's health; and then some one else proposed the bridegroom's; and Mr. Freyling was just getting upon his feet again to reply, when a sudden commotion was heard in the hall.

It was so sultry and beautiful a night, that every door and window was open.

Could some unruly people be taking advantage of that to force an entrance? some of the guests wondered, listening to the numerous voices and footsteps that were certainly entering and coming nearer.

They had not to wonder long.

Old Sam flung wide the door of the banqueting-room, and the uninvited visitors came in—quite a throng of them—headed by a handsome, distinguished-looking young man, whom one or two recognized as being Eberhard Windeley.

But there was a wonderful change about him. He had doffed his fishing dress for the quiet black of a gentleman's evening costume, and easy and graceful, gentlemanly and courteous, as one who was at home, he advanced to the end of the crowded table.

On his arm leaned a lady, tall and dark, whom one or two again recognized as Miss Carnarvon.

Beside her was the talkative Mr. Becker and another gentleman, unmistakably of legal cut, and after them two or three more people, perfect strangers to every one in the room except to Mr. Freyling.

He knew each one of them as his eyes met theirs; and such of the guests as chanced to be looking at him—who were not many, for interest was concentrated on the new-comers—saw that, as his features whitened, his stalwart frame seemed to shrink and quiver, and on his countenance there settled gradually the expression of despair.

His arms fell nerveless by his side. He still stood half leaning against the table, but uttered no sound.



Eberhard Windeley, advancing quietly, glanced round upon the startled, amazed people; his dark eyes gave one quick flash in Ermentrude's direction; but her golden head bent, and the plate before her was all that she could see.

"I am very glad indeed to see you all here," began the young man's ringing, pleasant voice, and some of the listeners wondered was he crazed? "Although it is not by invitation that you are honoring *my* house to-night, I hope the occasions will be many and not far distant when it will be so. I am coming to live among you as owner of Freyling Place. I have already resided among some of you under different auspices, and trust that the friends I have had the good fortune to make in those past days"—he glanced again at Ermentrude; but, pale and still, she made no response—"will be preserved and multiplied in the days to come. My friends, I welcome you all heartily, and hope the change of host will not interfere with your enjoyment this evening."

Every head turned with one accord from the utterer of this extraordinary speech to Mr. Freyling as murmurs of incredulity and amazement went round—murmurs that deepened as Freyling's demeanor was observed.

Standing there, a picture of helpless, stony despair, he strove to say something, and his dry lips failed him.

Seizing a champagne bottle near, he poured its contents into a glass, and drained it at one draught.

"What is the meaning of this insolence—this tomfoolery?" he said, unsteadily.

"The meaning, Mr. Carnarvon, as you know very well," said the legal-looking gentleman, advancing then and calmly taking up the story, "is that your imposture—your most daring and hitherto marvelously successful imposture—is discovered and defeated. We are here, my good man, to give you the chance of retiring quietly, and without your well-deserved punishment, from this scene of your roguery; in which case, we insist upon a full and complete confession, both verbal and written. In the event of your refusal to accept this most charitable offer of my friend here, Mr. Windeley—an event, however, we do not anticipate, for, with all your knavery, you are no fool, William Carnarvon—we are here to talk to you about a certain case of forgery, committed a year ago upon—"

"Excuse me," said Mr. Becker, pushing forward, "it is my duty to apprehend this man, in any case, on that charge of forgery—the forgery of Simon Lowless's name on a bank bill for five thousand dollars. Ah, yes, Mr. Carnarvon, you eluded me at N—— very cleverly, and that pretending to be dead was a neat dodge—a very neat dodge. But you need

not try any more of 'em now. You've run yourself out, that is what you have done, and I'll run you in as sure as my name's Becker—ha, ha!"—rubbing his hands, and turning round to see the effect his joke had upon the assembly.

The assembly was too enrapt to notice that there was a joke.

"I identify that man as my brother," said Miss Carnarvon, stepping forward at a signal from Eberhard Windeley, and pointing her thin, steady hand toward Freyling—"my brother, William Carnarvon. I swear to him. I would swear to, and could prove his identity to the satisfaction of any court of law. All these people"—she turned toward the strangers who had entered with her—"have known him intimately through all his life—would recognize him anywhere, and identify him now. Ah, William, you disowned me a week ago; I only revenge myself by owning you to-day my brother, a mild revenge, after all."

"Janet—my sister!" he whispered in dry, low, pleading tones.

She hesitated a moment, then slowly walked round to where he stood.

He put out his arm, put it round her, and, drawing her a few yards away from the table, bent and whispered to her eagerly.

Mr. Becker's keen gaze watched them as they stood; and perhaps he noted how the woman's hard expression softened as the man's pleading went on.

When he paused, she began in her turn to talk.

"I claim this house and lands"—Windeley's clear voice riveted attention again—"under the will of my uncle, Herbert Freyling, deceased. I knew Mr. Freyling when alive slightly; that man there—that impostor—knew him intimately; and when he died, (as I can prove that he did die suddenly, without warning, of heart disease, in a little village of Switzerland), that man, Carnarvon, by means I hope he will explain to us, carried out a daring idea of personating him. He passed himself off as the dead man, the dead man as himself, came boldly here, calling himself Freyling, and, thanks to my uncle's absence from this place since his boyhood, was unchallenged and accepted as the legitimate owner of Freyling Place. It was some time after the imposture was achieved that letters I received from my supposed uncle roused my suspicions; the writing (though a very fair imitation) and one or two little ignorances displayed on various matters raised my suspicions, and once raised, many other things strengthened them. I came here disguised as an ordinary fisherman to study the case and gain proof of the imposture, and I had soon plenty collected. Sam Ford, the one old servant of my uncle's whom



Carnarvon dared retain, had soon misdoubted his new master, and when I appeared, at once offered me his aid. To thoroughly satisfy his mind and my own, I laid a little plot. I wrote down the true circumstances of the case as we believed them then, and have proved them since, in a letter which I had conveyed to him without warning, on the occasion of the first entertainment he gave here. Watching him as he read that letter, we knew the truth, and I had then no further scruples. Some letters and papers were necessary for the proving of my identity and claim, but the obtaining them without caution impossible; so secretly twice I entered my own house—*my own house*, mind, in temporary possession of an impostor—and sought for and found among my uncle's documents those I needed."

He stopped there a moment, and deliberately looking across at Miss Flora Maynard, compelled by sheer force of will her eyes to meet his.

She colored painfully, and averted her head instantly.

"It looked rather a bad proceeding, I know, at the time. I felt horribly like a burglar on the second occasion; but a man can enter his own house when and how he chooses, and I knew that, by every law of the land, this house was mine then, with everything it contained. Is not that so, Mr. Burt?"—turning to the legal gentleman, who bowed and said that, from the day of Herbert Freyling's death, the Freyling property had belonged by right to his heir, Eberhard Windeley.

"On the midnight occasion of my entering here," continued Windeley, "I encountered Mr. Freyling, who, judging me by surrounding circumstances a rascal, gave me a rascally commission to perform, which I accepted that he might not employ some one else less scrupulous, but carried out in my own way, not his. Miss Carnarvon, who has to-day done me the greatest service, was to be—"

"Stop!" said William Carnarvon. "There is no need to say anything about that. I am ready now to make the confession you require; but, be it understood, I make it not from compulsion nor from fear" (Mr. Becker and the legal gentleman smiled, and the latter said "Ahem!"), "but at the request of my dear sister here, Janet Carnarvon; and also because I repent of the imposture which was, to a great degree, thrust upon me. Ladies and gentlemen,"—as he spoke he poured out and drank another glass of champagne,—"*all Mr. Windeley has told you is substantially true. Herbert Freyling and I were boys at school together, and afterward continued friends. He chose to live abroad; I also preferred to do so for a number of years, and we saw much of each other. There was always between us, I must remark, a most striking likeness, his high,*

complexion, even features, bearing strong resemblance to mine. I got into trouble last year, and wrote another person's name—"

"Forgery!" supplied Mr. Becker, promptly. "Forgery, my boy!"

"In consequence of which I again went abroad. Freyling heard of my trouble (from Mr. Becker there, whom I eluded by the by, at N—), and followed me to another little village near, called D—. There, as he and I stood talking, and he was greatly agitated at my confession that I really had done the thing, he suddenly put his hand to his heart, and as he did so, without word or warning, fell dead at my feet. I tried to restore him, but vainly; and then the temptation assailed me of personating him, simply to make my escape sure from the detectives after me. By changing clothes, papers, letters, etc., and altering the fashion of his and my hair and beard, the disguise on either side was complete. I left him lying there (he was shortly found and buried as myself), and went back to his hotel. Finding myself accepted there as the man I pretended to be, emboldened me. I knew much of Herbert Freyling's business, and his papers and luggage then in my possession told me more; but finding it impossible to manage the deception thoroughly from abroad, I ventured to come over here, intending to realize a considerable sum of money, go off with it, and throw the thing up, but in carrying out that idea I was thrown much with Mr. Bayliss. I saw his daughter, and my fate was sealed; for her sake I madly risked the danger I felt closing around me, and stayed on in her neighborhood, hoping to win her. To-morrow, with all my preparations completed, I should have quitted here forever, carrying with me a large sum of money—"

"We'll take care you don't do that!" interpolated Mr. Becker.

"And my bride. It was only until I had managed that that I wished Janet to be kept away. I am only one day short of success, and am beaten!"

His head sunk down as his voice stopped, and there was a moment's silence. Miss Carnarvon plucked her brother's arm, and he raised himself.

"One moment's private interview with my sister, and I am at your service, Mr. Becker," he said.

The detective answered nothing—perhaps he did not hear—and the brother and sister retired through the open window.

The guests, and the supper, and the detective waited in vain for their return; but when it was unmistakably borne in upon the minds of the expectant assemblage that William Carnarvon never would return, but that his quick cunning, with his sister's assistance, had com-



passed once more his escape, Mr. Becker merely said, with a smile, "I gave in that much to you, Mr. Windeley, but I took good care the rascal carried nothing with him; and, bless you, I shall have him again, as sure as a gun! He won't escape me a third time or my name is not Becker!"

#### CHAPTER X.

"WILL YOU BE MISTRESS OF FREYLING PLACE?"

"You will come with me, Flora?" said Ermentrude, entreatingly. "You will walk with me to Freyling Place?"

"Of course, if you insist," said Flora; "but I warn you, no companion more unfavorable to your interest could you choose. Mr. Windeley would rather see a wet walrus sitting in his newly-done up drawing-room than me, and I don't wonder at it."

"And you will stay in the room all the time? You won't leave me alone with him for one minute, Flo, dear?"

"All right," responded Flo, with mental reservations. "What do you suppose he would do if he found you alone with him for one minute—eat you? That would be very sad. You *used* to be rather fond of a good many minutes alone with him, Miss Ermentrude; but, of course, that was before—"

"That was before he had reason to despise me, as I know he does now, from the bottom of his heart," interrupted Ermentrude, turning away her head. "You don't know how I dread facing him, Flora!"

"My dear, if you are so certain of the state of the lower regions of his heart, you need not mind facing him, or turning your back upon him, conducting the interview in any manner you prefer. His contempt for you can no deeper go, so what does it signify? Put on your new shepherdess hat, though, and a becoming ruffle. The pretty child that it is!" (taking the golden head between her hands, and kissing it fondly). "He would not deserve the name of man who could despise such a face as this, I'm thinking."

As the two girls reached Freyling Place, and passed timidly through the gates, they saw Eberhard Windeley standing beside his dog-cart, with its high-stepping chestnut evidently on the point of departure. Tostig, jumping and elated, announced his intention of going, too.

"How lucky we have caught him!" said Flora, as the young man saw the figures advancing, and came hastily forward to welcome them.

Handsome, gentlemanly, easy in manner as ever, he looked; thoroughly the master of the place; thoroughly in keeping with its grand old style, as he led them himself through the

hall to the drawing-room; and yet nothing was changed about him but his dress since the days when Flora had rebuked her cousin for speaking to him.

How ashamed of herself she felt as she sat down on a velvet-covered lounge, and Ermentrude, trembling visibly, began: "We have come, Mr. Windeley—we have come upon—upon—"

"A distasteful or a difficult errand, seemingly," he put in, amusedly.

"Upon a matter of business," said she, hurriedly. "We won't—we won't detain you a moment. I only want to—" pausing, and longing for Flora to take up the cue—for anybody but herself to say something.

"Yes," replied he, gravely, moving to a seat nearer her, and fixing his look upon her to increase her confusion.

"Have you looked through your accounts?" she asked, desperately. "Have you seen what large sums of your money Mr. Freyling—he who called himself so—advanced to my father?"

"Upon the one condition that his daughter consented to be his wife," put in Flora, calmly. "That was how that marriage got arranged, Mr. Windeley—that marriage that rather surprised you and every one else not behind the scenes."

"No need to say anything about that," cried Ermentrude, redder than any peony, and getting eloquent through very confusion. "That money then advanced, Mr. Windeley, saved papa's business from ruin. He is getting on again well now; but he is unable to pay it to you back yet as I wish. Oh, how I wish he could! He wants me to ask you to wait, if you would be so very kind; to let him pay interest upon it, and repay it by installments as he is able. Oh, believe me, he will try his best! I am going to be so economical, and save every penny I can in the housekeeping. I have sent away most of the servants, and told the butcher to come only once a week. I will work my fingers to the bone sooner than you shall lose a cent through us."

She ended with a little sob.

Windeley looked at the pretty white hands, wringing together unconsciously in the girl's distress, and smiled.

"Could not we arrange it in some other way, Miss Bayliss?" he asked, bending nearer to her as he spoke.

"There is Tostig on the lawn!" cried Flora, in superhuman joy; and, quick as lightning, she darted out through the open French window.

"I don't know," faltered Ermentrude. "Perhaps if you and papa were to meet; but he is so crushed, so nervous, so distressed about it all, he sent me instead to-day."

"I would rather arrange it with you. An-



swer me one question, Ermentrude. Was it a relief when William Carnarvon went out of your life—when the bonds that bound you to him snapped that evening?"

"A relief?" She looked up, with her eyes speechful, her lovely face aglow. "Mr. Windeley, when I saw him go out of that supper-room window it was all I could do to prevent myself from throwing my arms round Flora's neck, and weeping aloud for joy."

"Why did you not throw them round mine instead?" he asked, mischievously.

She met his deep, tender, loving look, and a sudden flood of sunshine, of harmony, of sweetness seemed poured into the world.

"You were not near enough," she answered, saucily.

"I am near enough now," responded he, laughing.

And then he took the pretty, and in nowise unwilling, arms, and lifted them to his neck, as he clasped their owner in his own.

"You are taking a good deal for granted, sir," she whispered, nestling, nevertheless, her golden head on his shoulder with a sigh of fullest bliss and content.

"Not so much as you think, darling, returned he. "I happened to be behind a certain piece of rock some days ago, and overheard a certain confession made to her cousin by a certain young lady, which opened my eyes a good deal to certain facts."

"Oh," with a deep-drawn breath, "did you

really? And, Eberhard, you don't despise me now that you know the truth? And," raising to his her forget-me-not, smiling orbs, "you did care for me a little all those months that you were pretending to learn French, and—"

"Learning really to love you dearly, fondly, passionately!" he finished, with promptitude; "learning that there was one woman in the world, and only one, I could not live apart from! Miss Maynard," as Flora neared the window, "I am fulfilling, you see, my promise to you. I am trying my best to make your cousin mistress of Freyling Place. I have almost succeeded, but the decision rests with herself."

"Don't accept the situation, Ermentrude," cried Flora, "unless your future lord and master promises to forgive, for your dear sake, the most unwarrantable, unpardonable rudeness I was ever guilty of in my life. Mr. Windeley," coming close to him, with very hot cheeks, but eyes bravely straight, "I can only hope that in the press of other pleasanter matters you have forgotten half the terrible things I said, and all that I did to you. I meant them for the child's happiness; but—"

"The child has chosen her own way to be happy," he said, tenderly drawing Ermentrude's graceful figure toward him. "Miss Maynard, I have forgotten everything you are speaking of. And now, Ermentrude, will you marry me, and be mistress of Freyling Place?"

And Ermentrude answered, softly, "Yes."

THE END.



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 The Figures. For several small children.  
 The Trial of Peter Sloper. For seven boys.  
 Getting a Photograph. For males and females.  
 The Society for General Improvement. For girls.  
 A Nobleman in Disguise. Three girls and six boys.  
 Great Expectations. For two boys.  
 Playing School. For five females and four males.  
 Clothes for the Heathen. For one male and one female.  
 A Hard Case. For three boys.  
 Ghosts. For ten females and one male.

### Dime Dialogues, No. 9.

Advertising for Help. For a number of females.  
 America to England, Greeting. For two boys.  
 The Old and the New. For four females and one male.  
 Choice of Trades. For twelve little boys.  
 The Lap-Dog. For two females.  
 The Victim. For four females and one male.  
 The Duelist. For two boys.  
 The True Philosophy. For females and males.  
 A Good Education. For two females.  
 The Law of Human Kindness. For two females.  
 Spoiled Children. For a mixed school.  
 Brutus and Cassius.  
 Coriolanus and Aufidius.  
 The New Scholar. For a number of girls.  
 The Self-made Man. For three males.  
 The May Queen (No. 2). For a school.  
 Mrs. Lackland's Economy. For four boys and three girls.  
 Should Women be Given the Ballot? For boys.

### Dime Dialogues, No. 10.

Mrs. Mark Twain's Shoe. For one male and one female.  
 The Old Flag. School Festival. For three boys.  
 The Court of Folly. For many girls.  
 Great Lives. For six boys and six girls.  
 Scandal. For numerous males and females.  
 The Light of Love. For two boys.  
 The Flower Children. For twelve girls.  
 The Deaf Uncle. For three boys.  
 A Discussion. For two boys.  
 The Rehearsal. For a school.  
 The True Way. For three boys and one girl.  
 A Practical Life Lesson. For three girls.  
 The Monk and the Soldier. For two boys.  
 1776-1876. School Festival. For two girls.  
 Lord Dundreary's Visit. For two males and two females.  
 Witches in the Cream. For 3 girls and 3 boys.  
 Frenchman. Charade. Numerous characters.  
 The Hardscrabble Meeting. For ten males.

### Dime Dialogues, No. 11.

Appearances are very Deceitful. For six boys.  
 The Conundrum Family. For male and female.  
 Curing Betsy. For three males and four females.  
 Jack and the Beanstalk. For five characters.  
 The Way to Do it and Not to Do it. For three females.  
 How to Become Healthy, etc. For one male and one female.  
 The Only True Life. For two girls.  
 Classic Colloquies. For two boys.  
     I. Gustavus Vasa and Cristiern.  
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 Fashionable Dissipation. For two little girls.  
 A School Charade. For two boys and two girls.  
 Jean Ingelow's "Songs of Seven." For seven girls.  
 A Debate. For four boys.  
 Ragged Dick's Lesson. For three boys.  
 School Charade, with Tableau.  
 A Very Questionable Story. For two boys.  
 A Sell. For three males.  
 The Real Gentleman. For two boys.

### Dime Dialogues, No. 12.

Yankee Assurance. For several characters.  
 Boarders Wanted. For several characters.  
 When I was Young. For two girls.  
 The Most Precious Heritage. For two boys.  
 The Double Cure. For two males and four females.  
 The Flower-garden Fairies. For five little girls.  
 Jemima's Novel. For three males and two females.  
 Beware of the Widows. For three girls.  
 A Family not to Pattern After. For ten characters.  
 How to Man-age. An acting charade.  
 The Vacation Escapade. For four boys and teacher.  
 That Naughty Boy. For three females and one male.  
 Mad-cap. An acting charade.  
 All is not Gold that Glitters. Acting proverb.  
 Sic Transit Gloria Mundi. Acting charade.

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Two O'clock in the Morning. For three males.  
 An Indignation Meeting. For several females.  
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 The Noblest Boy. A number of boys and teacher.  
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 Not so Bad as it Seems. For several characters.  
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 Sense vs. Sentiment. For Parlor and Exhibition.  
 Worth, not Wealth. For four boys and a teacher.  
 No such Word as Fail. For several males.  
 The Sleeping Beauty. For a school.  
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 Old Nably, the Fortune-teller. For three girls.  
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 Mother is Dead. For several little girls.  
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 The Right not to be a Pauper. For two boys.  
 Woman Nature Will Out. For a girls' school.  
 Benedict and Bachelor. For two boys.  
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 The Surprise Party. For six little girls.  
 A Practical Demonstration. For three boys.  
 Refinement. Acting charade. Several characters.  
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 A Conclusive Argument. For two boy speakers.  
 A Woman's Blindness. For three girls.  
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 The Fatal Mistake. For two young ladies.  
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 Retribution. For a number of boys.



## THE DIME DIALOGUES.

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The Boy Who Wins. For six gentlemen.  
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Our Cause, [tion,

A Kentuckian's appeal,  
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SEC. II. THE ART OF ORATORY. Sheridan's List of the Passions: Tranquillity, Cheerfulness, Mirth, Raillery, Buffoonery, Joy, Delight, Gravity, Inquiry, Attention, Modesty, Perplexity, Pity, Grief, Melancholy, Despair, Fear, Shame, Remorse, Courage, Boasting, Pride, Obstinacy, Authority, Commanding, Forbidding, Affirming, Denying, Difference, Agreeing, Exhorting, Judging, Approving, Acquitting, Condemning, Teaching, Pardon-ing, Arguing, Dismissing, Refusing, Granting, De-pendence, Veneration, Hope, Desire, Love, Re-spect, Giving, Wonder, Admiration, Gratitude, Cu-riosity, Persuasion, Tempting, Promising, Affecta-tion, Sloth, Intoxication, Anger, etc.

SEC. III. THE COMPONENT ELEMENTS OF AN ORA-TION.—Rules of Composition as applied to Words and Phrases, viz.: Purity, Propriety, Precision. As applied to Sentences, viz.: Length of Sentence, Clearness, Unity, Strength. Figures of Speech; the Exordium, the Narration, the Proposition, the Confirmation, the Refutation, the Peroration.



## THE DIME SPEAKERS.

SEC. IV. REPRESENTATIVE EXERCISES IN PROSE AND VERSE.—Transition; A Plea for the Ox; Falstaff's Soliloquy on Honor; the Burial of Lincoln; the Call and Response; the Bayonet Charge; History of a Life; the Bugle; the Bells; Byron; Macbeth and the Dagger; Hamlet's Soliloquy; Old Things; Look Upward; King William Rufus; the Eye; an Essa Onto Musik; Discoveries of Galileo.

SEC. V. OBSERVATIONS OF GOOD AUTHORITIES.

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The Last of the Sarpints,  
The March to Moscow,  
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#### IV.—DEBATES.

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## THE DIME SPEAKERS.

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### Dime Readings and Recitations, No. 24.

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Footsteps of the Dead,  
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An Essay on Cheek.

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